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no. 13

WORLD INEQUALITY DIGITAL LIFE AND THE STATE

by Harry

The creeping social inequality in Britain has become a source of growing concern to many. When strikes and despair over the income disparity within a single country or locale feature often in our politics, do we unjustly forget the scale of global wealth inequality?

I am not writing this article to belie the social calamity of income inequality in Britain, nor to argue for more urgency in remedial foreign policies such as development assistance. This is purely an analysis of the long-term crisis represented by global disparities of wealth, and the historical choices it will force on many actors in the world-system, from states to activists.

In a talk I heard in my studies at Lancaster University in 2012, former Home Secretary Charles Clarke gave his predictions on the greatest threats to global security in the short-term and long-term future. One of his predictions struck me as the most important: the ease with which modern media allows different strata of the world to see one another's vastly different lifestyles, thus threatening to turn global inequality into an ever greater spectacle.

This spectacle has the potential to inspire global rage, perhaps justifiable in the same sense as encountered in the years preceding the French Revolution. Indeed, the present world order resembles France's Ancien Régime in many ways.

Interestingly, the term "Third World", used to denote less "developed" states, comes from the term "Third Estate", which referred to "commoners" in France's Ancien Régime – the subjects who rose up and turned their kingdom into a republic. Famously, Alfred Sauvy coined the term when he presented

an analogy between exploited colonial states under the European powers and exploited subjects living under absolute monarchy, in an article for L'Observateur in 1952.

Since Sauvy coined the term, decolonization has achieved its popular ends, but an exploitative structure remains in place. At least that is the view of dependency theorists, world-systems theorists and other structuralist critics of the international system. The most eminent of these analysts is Imma nuel Wallerstein, possibly the greatest sociologist alive.

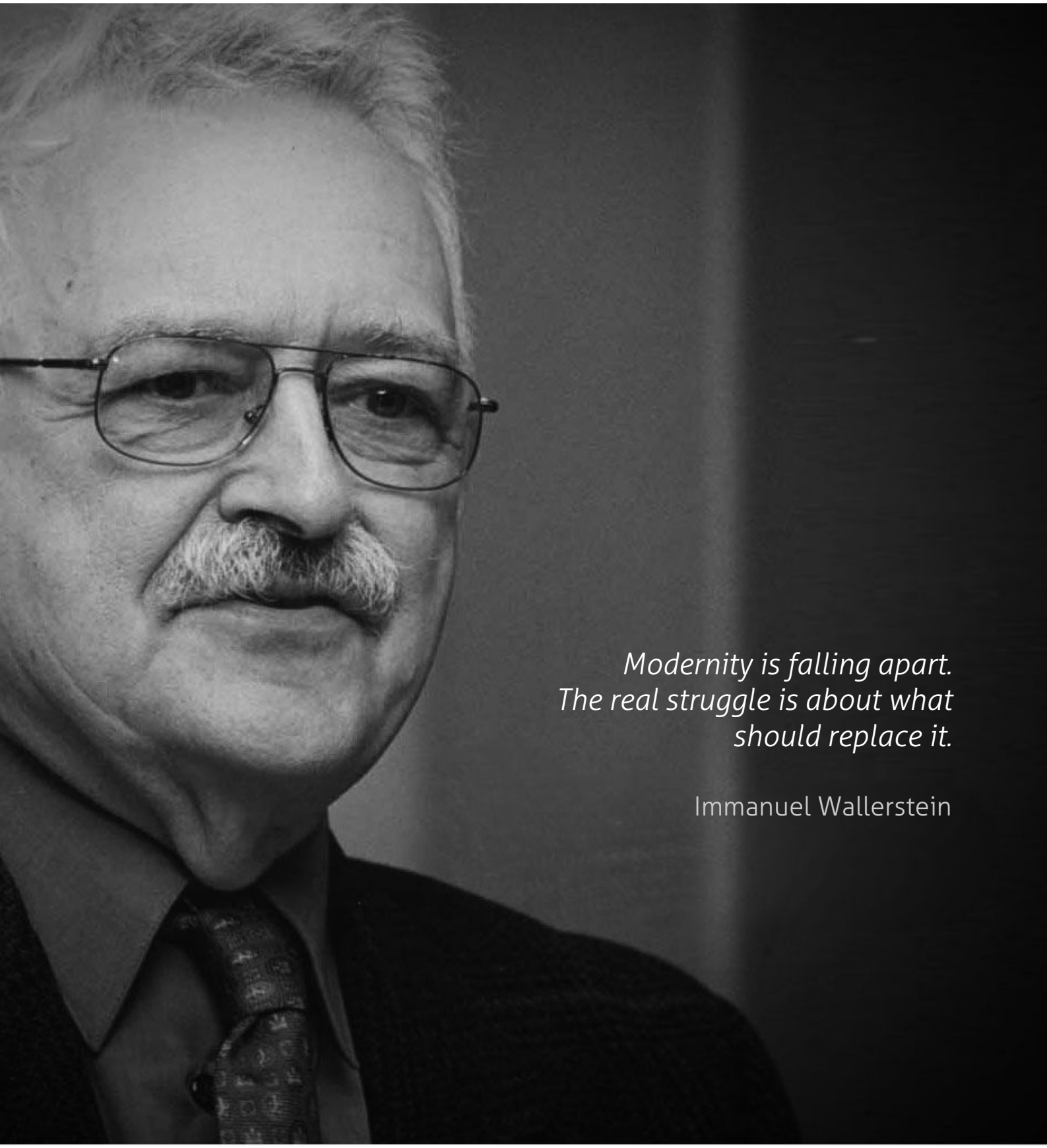
In Wallerstein's analysis, the modern thesis of "development" supported by the United Nations and other intergovernmental institutions is as much to blame for world inequality as Europe's colonial "civilizing" thesis that came before it. In his widely taught theory of the world-system , the world can be socially and geographically broken down into three strata based on the kind of production processes occurring in different states and geographic regions.

Immanuel Wallerstein sees world inequality not as something proceeding from countries lagging behind others as a result of historic oppression and debt, but as something proceeding from the existence of "countries" altogether.

In his assessment, the division of the world into distinct nation-states is founded on arbitrary distinctions among the human race, and this gives rise to world inequality. Taking up such logic, it is hard for one to deny that the dissolution of the nation-state model itself would be a core part of any long-term political designs for remedying world inequality.

If the abandonment of the nation-state model seems too radical for you at this stage, it is not too radical for Wallerstein. In Utopistics (1998) he predicts that a crisis that could occur as early as the coming half-century will create real opportunities to seriously challenge the nation-state model.

He does not say what alternative system this crisis entails, but argues that there will be a unique opportunity to construct something far more egalitarian than anything previously known. If a more equitable order is indeed gained, this would involve borders ceasing to be necessary or recognized, and authoritarian state norms becoming unsustainable.



Modernity is falling apart.
The real struggle is about what
should replace it.

Immanuel Wallerstein

We can already see antagonisms that are directly tied to the transnational wealth inequalities on which this article is focused. Often misleadingly framed as issues between two states, they are actually issues between opposing strata of the world-system itself.

Such issues include crises on the land, like migration to the United States through its brutally enforced border with Mexico, and the inhumane occupation of Palestinian land by the Israeli State. They include crises on the water, such as migration from North Africa to Spain and Italy.

The crises tied to the enforcement of borders are part of the larger crisis gripping what Wallerstein calls the "interstate system". This interstate system is the "political superstructure" of a global division of labor predicated on the historic industrial inequality persisting between entire continents and so-called nations. Strong states possess advanced factories and skills, while weak states are left to mine arduously.

Wallerstein describes this exploitative situation in terms of a "core-periphery" relationship, in which the industrialized powers represent the "core".

US - Mexico Border

Another side to this crisis of the state is the alarming spread of internecine conflict and the growing perception of law enforcers as illegitimate, arbitrary and cruel (the 2014 F erguson Riots are a compelling example of this and demonstrate that the US is not exempt).

Such trends point inexorably towards the view that the nation-state may eventually be fated to be abandoned – not just in a particular country, but everywhere.

In my view, Wallerstein's analysis is compelling. However, it lacks emphasis on the dawn of digital life, which has added a whole new dimension to the crisis of the world-system by literally turning the world into a community of individuals interacting on an unprecedented supranational level. This is historically important and bound to change global politics for very profound and complex reasons.

Another key historian of the world-system, Benedict Anderson, says something insightful about our modern nation-states in his book, Imagined Communities (1982). His analysis differs from Wallerstein's, mainly due to his greater emphasis on technology and language. He gives the example of Bismarck's Germany as the first modern nation-state, which differs from Wallerstein's preoccupation with revolutionary France.

In Imagined Communities, Anderson explains that the telegraph and rail systems allowed Germany to become a unified nation, by developing a sense of national consciousness.

If telegraph led to the formation of national consciousness through an illusory sense of community enough to give rise to a nation, surely it follows that the internet – with its profound revolution in our lives – will give rise to something equally significant.

The champion of today's rebel "cypherpunk" elite, Julian Assange, has said something very approximate to this in his own rhetoric, arguing that a "new body politic" is rising to challenge government authority through the internet.

He also describes digital life as borderless and free, in such a way that can only become more and more real as digital technology continues its exponential growth. It is no accident that this sounds like the egalitarian post-state future leaned towards by Wallerstein as humanity's noblest alternative.

Modern political legitimacy is founded on the doctrine of popular sovereignty, as Immanuel Wallerstein repeatedly points out in his works. One may be the citizen of a "nation" by having certain arbitrary qualities or place of birth, and as such may be treated equally and defended by a given state.

This is what we call being part of a nation, whether it is the United States or a highly contested "state" like Palestine or Abkhazia. However, the basis of such an institution is very much in question, and in the future it will become increasingly weakened by the growing transnational consciousness brought about by weakening borders and exponential digital communication.

Where does this lead us? Shall we reject popular sovereignty as obsolete? Impossible. It is the sacrosanct foundation of all modern democracy and civil rights, and the only reliable metric of social progress. Self-determination of nations has been part of the doctrine of popular sovereignty, as is the idea that regimes must be legitimately elected to power by their constituent nations.

However, if the nation is to become obsolete, as predicted in Wallerstein's analysis of the crisis of the world-system, self-determination still stands because human rights are sacrosanct. The self-recognition of transnational humanity as sovereign must follow, and global lines of transport and communication make that feasible.

THE HARD PART IS EDUCATING PEOPLE THAT THEIR DEAR €NATION€ NO LONGER EXISTS, AND THAT IS WHY SPEECH AND WRITING TO SUSTAIN A GLOBAL SOCIAL NARRATIVE ARE SO VITAL.

Perhaps the end result of the self-determination of humanity is not necessarily "global citizenship" as predicted by some (redundant, since citizenship is designed to exclude others and serves no purpose if it lacks this proscriptive power). Nor is it necessarily "world government". However, we can know that human rights like self-determination will outlive the existence of the nation-state, and the alternative regime will then be designed and elected by the whole of transnational humanity rather than a particular group.

A new form of network-centric governance, authoritative but not authoritarian, based on scientific methods of evaluation, and tolerating no disparities in wealth or information, is a model that could supersede all the nations and make world inequality obsolete.

Such a revised politics would be intellectually consistent with and assist to usher in a Global Resource-Based Economy.

E

by Colin

"To save man from the morass of propaganda, in my opinion, is one of the chief aims of education. Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from the fiction." — ***Martin Luther King***

"School is the advertising agency which makes you believe that you need society as it is." ***Ivan Illich***

"I pay the schoolmaster, but it is the schoolboys that educate my son." ***Ralph Waldo Emerson***

Perhaps the most vital component necessary in redesigning society into a more sustainable method is the field of education. I want to be clear that by no means do I consider myself an expert on how to educate children. I do not have the experience nor the qualifications to draw up the blueprints for a newly designed educational system entirely from the ground up. Instead, what I will do throughout this section is expose the system of education we currently see in all countries for what it is.

Some of my critiques and arguments are backed up and supported by some of the top minds in the field of education around the world, or by people who actually do have experience and credibility to speak to these issues.

To begin, I want to start with a case study. I will then provide a multiple-choice list of possible solutions for how to best correct the problem and help a student who expresses a common behavior. For those who have had training and education in doing this (teachers and educators), this should be nothing new.

For those who have no experience working in the field of education, the best thing to do in this hypothetical example is to think like a member of a jury; look at the evidence and choose the best possible answer.

CASE STUDY: GILLIAN

Gillian is nearing the end of primary school. During her arts classes (music, physical education, etc.), Gillian receives outstanding marks from her teacher. Though not intentionally, she is sometimes disruptive in the regular classroom due to her inability to pay attention.

She has trouble sitting still and focusing on her studies and lessons. Attempts by the teacher to discipline her in the regular classroom have proven to be unsuccessful. Gillian is at risk for not succeeding to her full potential if some kind of intervention is not taken early. What do you think the next course of action should be from the school or teacher?

A. Gillian should probably be tested for some form of mental disorder (ADD, ADHD, anxiety, etc) to determine if medication is an appropriate option.

B. Gillian should have her free time privileges taken away until her behavior improves (i.e. physical education, music, recess, etc.).

C. Gillian should just try to do the best she can in school.

D. Gillian should be given more intellectually stimulating work from the teacher in the classroom in order to challenge her.

E. All of the above.

The list above includes some of the most popular choices considered by schools, teachers, and doctors in order to provide a solution to Gillian's inability to pay attention. What was your answer? Believe it or not, this was actually a true account. I will now retell the real story of the above case study and you can compare the answer you chose.

In the 1930s, there was a little girl named Gillian. This little girl had trouble sitting still and focusing on her studies and lessons. Though not intentionally, at times she would be disruptive and the parents were eventually notified about her behavior. Gillian then went on to see a specialist to determine what the best course of action should be for her.

After the teacher had finished expressing all the behaviors, the specialist asked to speak to the mother privately. He stood up, walked over to his desk and turned on the radio, and exited the room with the mother. He then told the mother to observe through the window what happens. They watched. Soon enough, Gillian began to move in stride with the music. The specialist looked at the mother and told her, "Your daughter's not sick. She's a dancer. Take her to a dance school," (source).

On the advice of the doctor, the mother did just that. "Gillian attended the Royal ballet, eventually founded her own company (The Gillian Lynne Dance Company), has been responsible for some of the most successful musical theater productions in history, she's given pleasure to millions, and became a multimillionaire before the end of her career. Someone else might have put her on medication and told her to calm down," (source).

Did you come up with this diagnosis? You might be saying, "Well 'dance school' wasn't in the list of options." This is true, and I did that on purpose; unlike multiple choice tests, real life doesn't present solutions clearly. When you live in a box, it is impossible to envision what is beyond your box. In other words, if the education you receive teaches a certain set of solutions, solutions which are not taught are seldom prescribed.

This hypothetical exercise is precisely what teachers are often faced with today. In my own experience as a classroom teacher, I have recommended that parents should get their children tested for various 'so called' learning disabilities—such as ADD or ADHD... all the way to being tested for learning disabilities or special education needs.

I should say that teachers are not qualified to make a diagnosis themselves. We are not officially trained to recognize certain symptoms of what psychologists and psychiatrists proclaim to be various psychological disorders, but we do study about them in our university education (at least I did).

If we are concerned about a student's progress or behavior, it is not uncommon for teachers to express to the parents what we see. This is a delicate situation and must be conducted in a way that would not indicate we are making a formal diagnosis (because in truth, we are not qualified to do so even if we are sure).

Instead, teachers often delicately point out the issue by saying, 'Here is the behavior I see,' and then asking if the parent sees the same behavior at home. Often teachers make subtle hints about getting a formal diagnosis or simply ask if they have done so themselves.

Understanding why the behavior is being expressed from a qualified professional would be a good starting point to determine how we can help the child. I am beginning to see that this is, perhaps, the wrong course of action and I will explain the reason further down in this article.

The fact is, schools, and especially teachers, do not have the resources—staffing, funding, materials, personal freedom, etc. —to address the very different individual needs of each student in the classroom. This is not the fault of teachers themselves; good teachers try to do the best they can given the limitations of the educational system they are a part of.

The education system has been structured around conformity since the standardization of curriculum, and since students are often not allowed to deviate from what the curriculum requires and given that teachers are required to teach the curriculum in the way it is written, instead of encouraging each child to nurture their own creativity, children instead learn conformity.

For example, did any of you tell yourself that perhaps the solution to Gillian's problem was because she was meant to pursue a career in dancing? My feelings are that 'send her to a dance school' did not even cross the minds of anyone here. Why is this? What is so wrong with being a professional dancer? Or a professional musician? Or perhaps an actor or professional magician? The answer is about to be revealed.

A new study called “The Learning Curve” concluded that Finland currently has the best educational structure in the world (the US is now 17th, according to this report), (source). The study mentions that “countries need to ‘educate for the future, not just the present’” because “many of today's job titles...simply did not exist 20 years ago." This is because the speed at which technology has been accelerating throughout history is also reshaping the professions of each future generation.

Sir Ken Robinson, a world-renowned education and creativity expert and recipient of the RSA's Benjamin Franklin award, has been speaking about this same issue. He stated in 2006 that “Children who begin school this year will be retiring in the year 2065.

Despite all the expertise surrounding the field, nobody has a clue what the world will look like in five years time, yet teachers today are supposed to be educating them for it,” (source). Adjusting this to today’s calendar, children who begin kindergarten in the year 2015 will be retiring in the year 2075, a relative eternity from now.
This is a point that is not frequently considered by educators.

How is it possible for teachers to instruct students on how to integrate into a society when they have absolutely no idea how the future will embrace the skills they are teaching?

In addition, many of the veteran teachers of today are not even technologically competent or have any computer skills whatsoever, yet are supposed to be educating the children for a future in which technology is nearly impossible to avoid.

Though Finland thinks they have figured out how to address this unpredictability by offering small class sizes, caring about student learning, providing qualified teachers, and cooperating with parents, their core system is essentially nothing new in theory or practice.

About the only thing I can find that is considerably a step up is when it comes to SES (socioeconomic status). "All students receive a free meal daily, as well as free health care, transportation, learning materials, and counseling in their schools, so that the foundations for learning are in place." Finland also provided "social supports" in the past "for children and families... including health and dental care, special education services, and transportation to schools," (source).

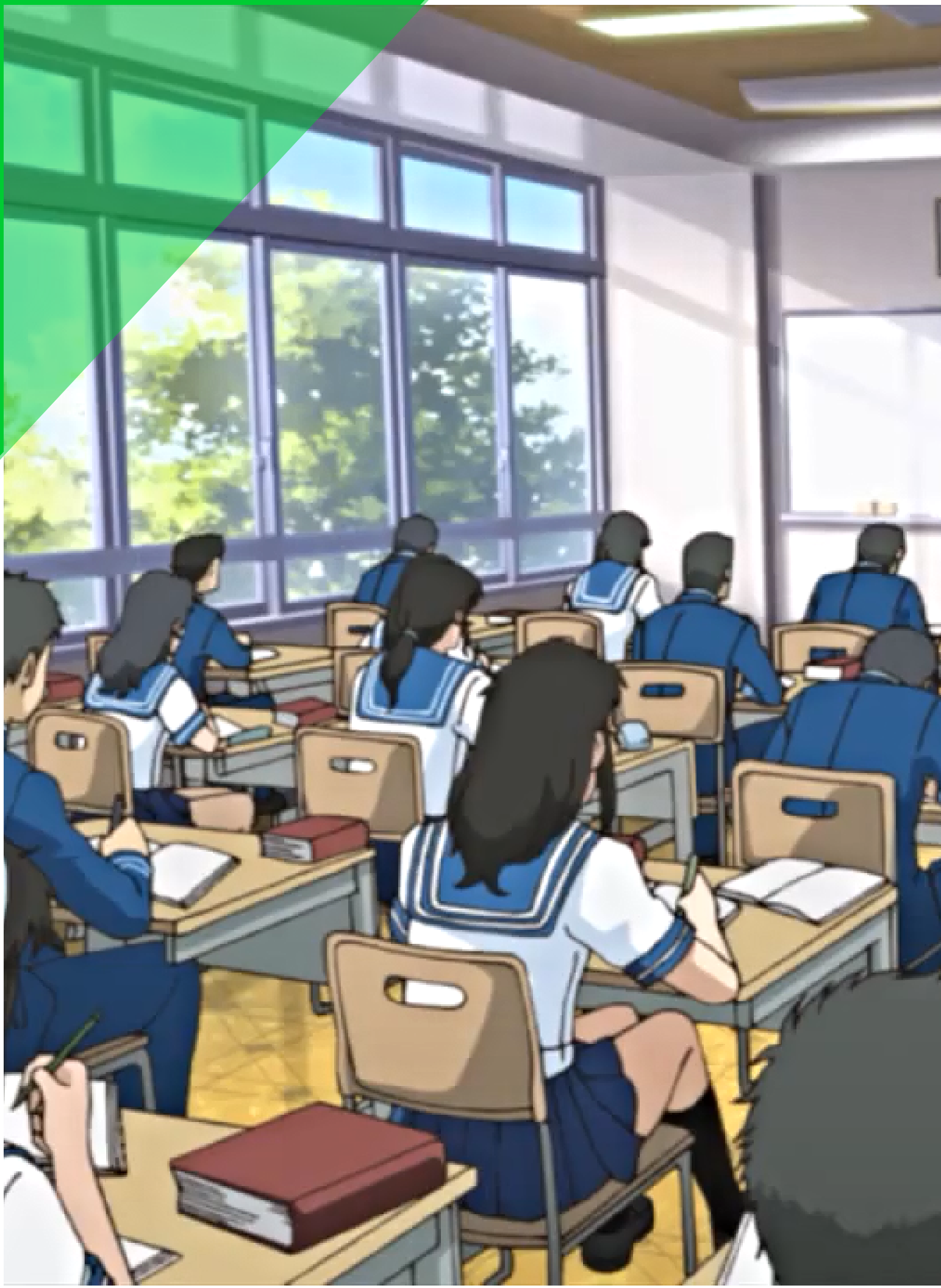
Providing families with care that will be supportive for a child's learning would hugely increase academic success, but falls short of being a miracle cure. Our culture is still the biggest obstacle teachers face. If a parent has particular views that are damaging to a child's learning, there is little a teacher can do to allow a child to reach their full potential.

For example, in South Korea I had to frequently explain to students that writing their name in red ink would not ensure their imminent death. I also had to explain that closing the doors and windows while a fan is running would not kill you in your sleep (fan death).

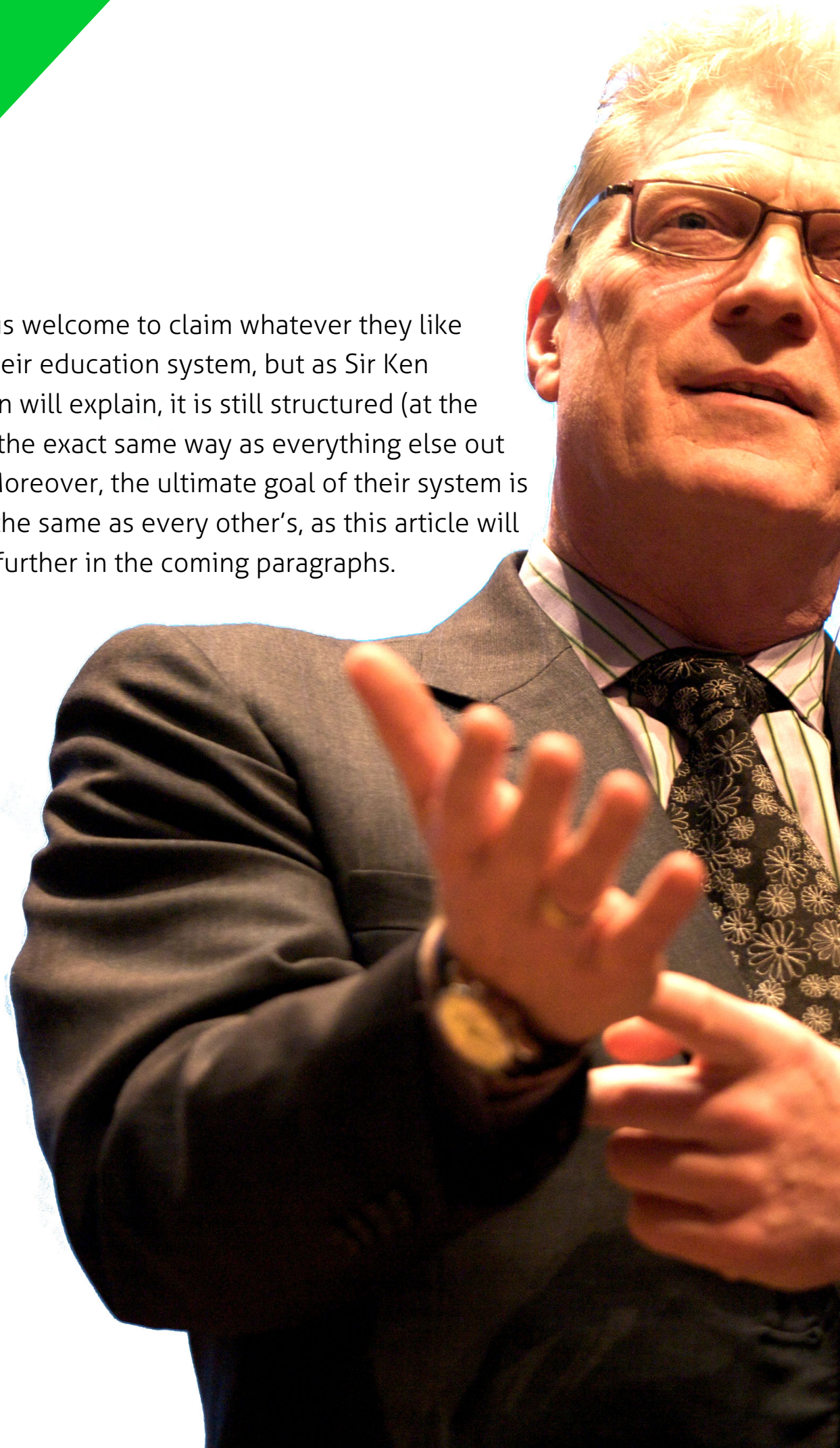
This brings me to a sub-point about educational system rankings. South Korea's educational system has been recently ranked quite highly compared to other countries (source - see slideshow). However, having lived and taught in the South Korean school system for 3 years, I can comment. In my observation, students are pushed to memorize information, not think critically and often can't as a result.

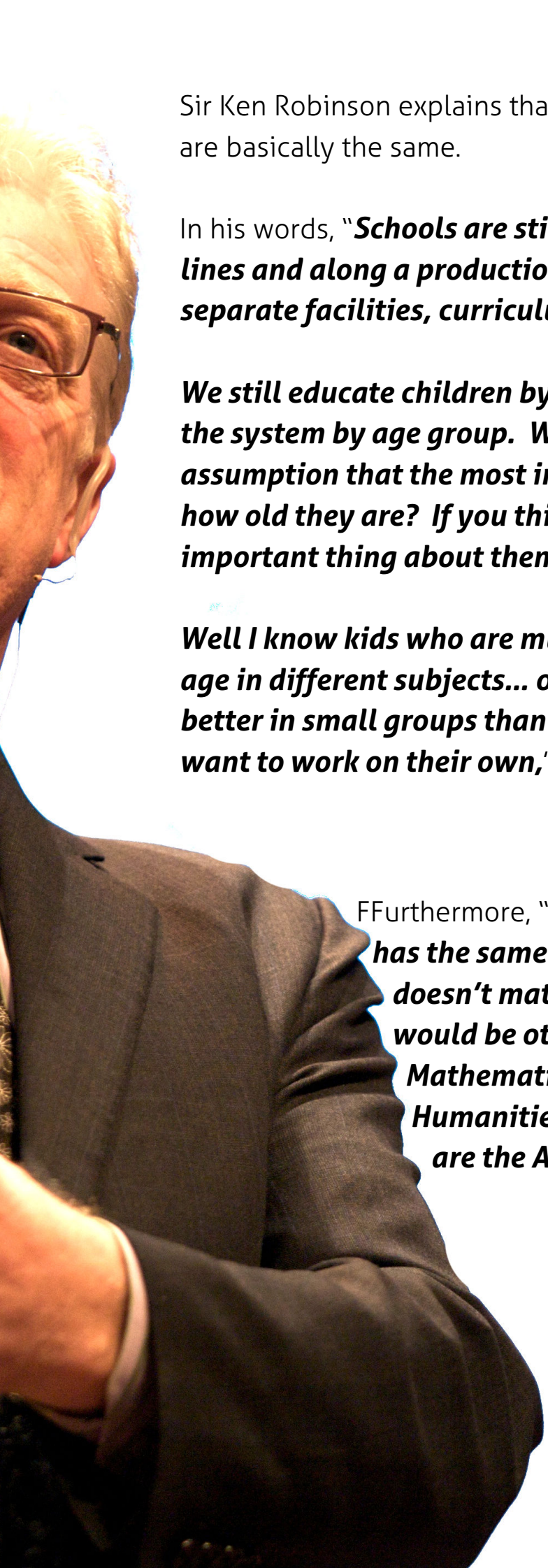
In my experience, I see students trusting every piece of information in a textbook (I frequently had to point out inaccuracies). A student's test score is also the most important achievement one can get in school, as it ensures a top placement in "the best" high schools (secondary schools) and universities. All a test score expresses is that a particular student has the ability to memorize information and make educated guesses.

They certainly do not show an ability to think critically or analyze data on important subjects. So you see, world rankings and reality are quite different.



Finland is welcome to claim whatever they like about their education system, but as Sir Ken Robinson will explain, it is still structured (at the core) in the exact same way as everything else out there. Moreover, the ultimate goal of their system is exactly the same as every other's, as this article will explain further in the coming paragraphs.





Sir Ken Robinson explains that all education systems around the world are basically the same.

In his words, "***Schools are still pretty much organized on factory lines and along a production-line mentality—ringing bells, separate facilities, curriculum specialized into separate subjects.***

We still educate children by batches. We put the students through the system by age group. Why do we do that? Why is there this assumption that the most important thing kids have in common is how old they are? If you think about it, it's like the most important thing about them is their date of manufacture.

Well I know kids who are much better than other kids at the same age in different subjects... or at different times of the day... or are better in small groups than in large groups... or sometimes just want to work on their own," (source).

FFurthermore, "***every educational system on earth has the same hierarchy of subjects. Every one; it doesn't matter where you go. You'd think it would be otherwise, but it isn't. They all place Mathematics and Languages at the top, with Humanities in the middle, and at the bottom are the Arts - everywhere on earth,***" (source).

Why is this the case?

Teachers have known for decades that the core subjects like mathematics, science, reading, and writing have been given priority over subjects like music, physical education, sports, art, library programs, extracurricular activities, and others.

Although many teachers, especially the arts teachers, know the value in these subjects, all are powerless to control the ever shrinking budget for these programs. As teachers, we just kind of accept this as the way it is, often blaming these issues on politics, bureaucracy, or faulty legislation and lobbying.

But is this really true? What if it's not 'politics' that is to blame? What if the problems we see in education are not caused from bureaucracy, faulty legislation, or various corporations lobbying for their own interests? What if these factors are just symptoms of a larger problem? What if the actual cause for these shrinking budgets is due to something a lot more subtle... such as the entire education system itself? What if the whole system was designed this way, on purpose?

Many people are not aware that, prior to the 19th century, there wasn't much of a global concept of public education at all, (source). The whole idea of public education was "a revolutionary idea" and was highly resisted by the people of the 19th century.

It was resisted primarily because public education had never been previously "funded by taxation," nor had it ever been made "compulsory to everybody"(source).

In order to educate oneself in these days, family members passed on what they felt was necessary to their children—or if one was wealthy enough, could afford to be educated by Jesuits. The current educational model or design "was conceived and constructed and structured for a different age.

It was conceived during the intellectual culture of the Enlightenment and in the economic circumstances of the Industrial Revolution," (sou rce). At this point in history, "the Enlightenment view of intelligence" basically categorized people into two groups: "academic and nonacademic; intelligent people and non-intelligent people.

And the consequence of this is that many brilliant people think that they are not... because they have been judged against this particular view of the mind," (source).

Today, this viewpoint is still very much the same. We, generally speaking, still very much equate academic success with intelligence. White collar jobs require bachelor's degrees or higher; going to college is praised by our friends and families while choosing another route is often not encouraged; when dating, professional and educational backgrounds are often the first questions inquired about. Clearly, there is a bias that college makes one "educated."

Why else would I have been encouraged throughout my life to get a Masters degree instead of just spending a few hours each week in the public library?

I cannot speak to the type of education received by all teachers. I can only speak to the education which I personally received. While finishing my teacher training at the University of Oregon, my cohort was taught about various different teaching strategies which sought to address the needs of many different types of learners.

One of these theories made claims that there were at least 9 different ways students learn. This is referred to as Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences: (Naturalist (Nature Smart), Musical, Logical-Mathematical (Number/Reasoning Smart), Existential (Philosophical), Interpersonal (People Smart), Bodily-Kinesthetic, Linguistic (Word Smart), Intrapersonal (Self Smart), and Spatial (Picture Smart).

Yet, despite being instructed on these multiple teaching theories, it is increasingly difficult for teachers to apply this knowledge in the general education classroom. This is largely due to the fact that the current structure of education is only focused around what are referred to as the core subjects—with math, reading, writing, and science topping the list.

This has proven to be more true as time has gone on with various attempts at altering the education system. In America, one example is with programs like No Child Left Behind (NCLB). A more recent example is with the "Common Core" program in the US.

At the elementary school level, teachers all across the US are seeing a rise in the number of students diagnosed with ADHD, with some areas declaring it as an epidemic. We are living in the most technologically advanced era in all of human history, yet children today are being pumped full of medications because it is thought that they are not conforming to an outdated 19th century mentality of education.

We are using a system for educating children that was conceived and constructed for a very different era - one that was absent all of our modern technology. Using this outdated practice with today's potential is purging student creativity and fostering conformity, instead of creativity.

This is not happening because of some grand conspiracy devised by evil men. It is occurring because the business and working world has not evolved along with advancements in technology, knowledge, and other human achievements. What few realize is that "the rise in ADHD is almost parallel with the growth of standardized testing" (source) and rote memorization.

Thanks to NCLB, there have been more cuts to the national school curriculum than ever before in history. Subjects such as art, PE, and music were again given secondary priority to "the more important subject areas", such as math, reading, and writing. As a result, this shift in focus forced countless teachers into performing an act called "teaching to the test."

"Teaching to the test" is when top priority is given to the material likely to appear on standardized tests. Teaching to the test is, of course, illegal, or at best, unethical. Therefore, most schools simply substitute the words 'teaching to the test' with the word 'review.' Schools are really powerless to resist this governmental influence. Politicians are constantly interfering with the educational system, feeling that they know precisely what is best for children, despite never having been educated in this field.

They don't ask teachers for advice when drafting legislation or choosing and designing curriculum. Instead, they rely on the intellect of lobbyists, lawyers, or private financiers to draft the educational policies they are not qualified to make. The end result is that we see programs like NCLB being implemented across the US, changing the focus from what matters to meaningless tests. Standardized tests teach kids two things: how to memorize material, and to increase rote memorization and educated guessing. Doing so causes students and teachers to forgo more important skills such as critical, analytical, and divergent thinking.

When I taught fourth grade, even the writing response questions were being replaced by multiple-choice. I later found out why. According to Arriana Huffington, author of the book *Third World America: How Our Politicians Are Abandoning the Middle Class and Betraying the American Dream*, "Essay response questions on tests can be up to 1,000 times more expensive to score."

All of this and more have disastrous effects on students. Again, I want to be clear about what I'm saying here. Teachers do the best they can with the conditions they are given, and many do an absolutely brilliant job by combining new teaching strategies that account for these multiple intelligences in their lesson planning.

But doing so consistently is not always possible, due to the plethora of behavioral challenges that teachers face in the classroom. Teacher's face students with increased behavioral problems, undiagnosed learning disabilities, physical limitations, mental retardation, emotional disturbances caused from an unsupportive home environment, poverty (which can affect a student's food intake, nutrition, and access to medications), bullying, and numerous other factors which can affect a child's education.

In my first year as a fourth grade teacher, I had 5 students that really had no business ever being in the same room as each other. "Claire" would throw a fit each day, due to what I perceived as an undiagnosed anxiety disorder that stemmed from an unstable home environment. Her fits of emotional outbursts could be set off from something as little as her pencil lead breaking, to a slight change in the daily routine.

"Steven's" mother had gone through three marriages in the last few years and the child was so emotionally distraught that he was struggling just to make it through the day. He was bullying students in the playground, including Claire, to gain acceptance from whom he perceived were the cool kids.

"Dimitri" was almost expelled and had recess privileges taken away because he would get in fights. He was being bullied because his father was from Russia. "Peter" acted out any time a subject required reading, in order to hide the fact that he couldn't read with any retention or comprehension. I literally had to focus all of my attention on him in order to prevent him from sabotaging entire lessons to avoid having to do the work. I had to also make sure he didn't bully the two special needs kids every time I had to work with small groups.

Finally, "Jessie" constantly did what is referred to by parents as "back talking" or "talking back", because he liked the attention he received from the laughter which followed. He'd frequently engage in a power struggle with me, resulting in wasted time, contagious disrespect or apathy, and many other group disturbances.

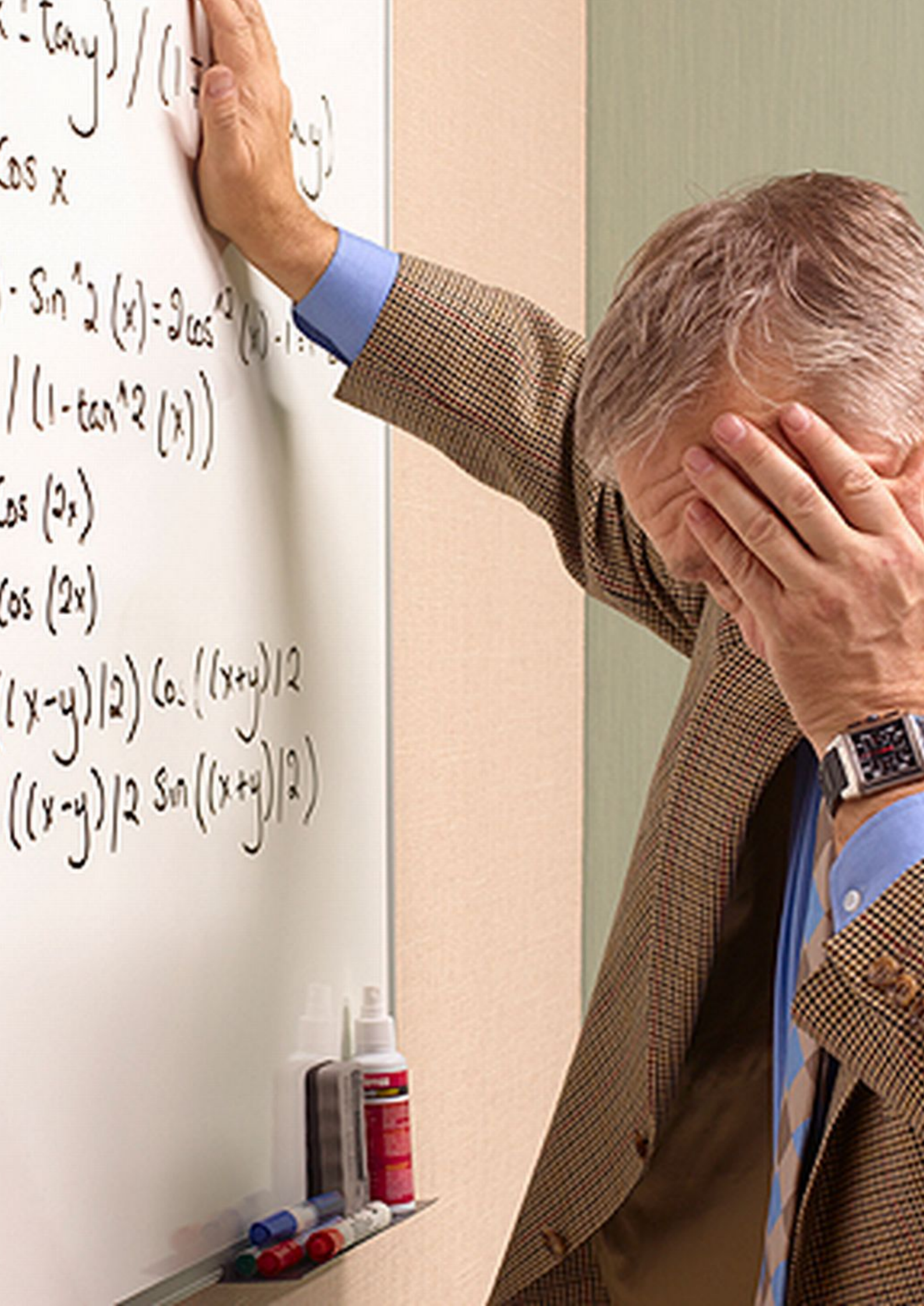
Yet my job was not only to maintain order in this classroom, but to also teach the required curriculum effectively so that the students could meet the state standards at the end of the year in the core subjects.

These challenges may be easier for a more experienced teacher, but the fact is, these behaviors still affect the overall dynamics of a public school classroom, regardless of experience or knowledge of teaching practice.

The truth is, though my class was dysfunctional, it was not nearly as challenging as the majority of classes throughout the nation. Having subbed in many other classrooms, I know this to be true.

Yet, despite all of the behavior problems teachers experience on a daily basis, our job is to focus on the core subjects in preparation for the yearly standardized tests, which serve as a determinant of the students' intellectual ability.

Again, the question is why? Why do we seem to only focus on these core subjects? Is it because these subjects have more value than the others? Clearly this is not true.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The reason that politicians are constantly interfering with the educational process is the same reason why schools and teachers are focusing on these core subjects and pushing back others. It was decided back in the 19th century that these core subjects are the most useful subjects which can prepare people for entering the workforce.

That's right—the purpose of education is not to educate, inspire creativity, develop genius, encourage social development, prepare for life, or further artistic expression. Teachers have invented and added these purposes into the daily routine because they care about children, but they are not built into its design, and this is why we teachers never seem to have time to nurture these important skills.

Again, our current educational system was "modeled on the interests of the Industrial Revolution and in the image of it."(source).

One's education is a continuous process. I have always been puzzled by the concept of graduation. Isn't it strange that we feel that because we have graduated, our education is somehow finished? Why don't we continue to attend universities throughout our lives?

A person does not stop learning at the age of 18 or 25, so why does one's schooling stop at such an early age? The system of education functions in this way purely because we all must go to work.

The intellectual culture of the Enlightenment invented the concept of public education for this reason—to meet the demands imposed by industrialization. Translation: to educate the masses just enough to put them to work.

And going to work is an urgent process; we must go to work before our bodies are too old to live up to wear and tear; and also early enough to save sufficient money for retirement. These are ancient and outdated social customs that need to be eliminated in our future generations.

If education was a continuous process throughout life, rather than a finite resource, far more brilliant minds would exist and society would be all the better for it.

Jacque Fresco asks the question, why is it that so few brilliant minds have ever existed (Tesla, Einstein, Edison, Franklin, Copernicus, Galileo, da Vinci, etc.)?

"During the thousands of years of the monetary system, most workers have been paid just enough to make it necessary that they return to work, even when higher wages have been possible. How else can the wage-payer ensure that the workers keep coming back?"

This reliance on work, rather than study, prevents thinkers from breaking out in society. Even considering some of the most brilliant minds we see today, many are still hindered from reaching their full potential, due to the levels of conformity taught to them by our school systems.

Jacque argues that if children were educated properly, we would see far more brilliant minds exist within our societies, as they would not be hindered by politics, socioeconomic factors, privileges, racism, or any of the other socially constructed norms that prohibit students from succeeding to their potential.

We are still educating children under this production-line mentality and it is even being furthered by our universities. This is why society is still defining intelligence based upon academic ability—a mentality which has not changed since the 19th century—rather than what truly defines intelligence.

The founders of the public education system did this by centralizing the importance of education around academic ability by setting up a curriculum with a specific structure. They framed the system into two pillars.

The first pillar placed "the most useful subjects for the worker at the top of the hierarchy." (math, reading, writing, science, and other core subjects). This is why students are "benignly steered away from subjects they like on the grounds that they would never get a job doing that.

Don't do music; it's not realistic that you will ever be a musician. Don't do art; you won't make a living as an artist. Benign advice; now profoundly mistaken."(source).

The second idea is academic ability, which has really come to dominate our view of intelligence, because the universities designed the system in their own image by ensuring that graduates of the system (white collar) receive the benefits of a respectable profession while non-graduates (blue collar) are viewed as inexperienced or otherwise not qualified.

Universities, at least in the US, do have their advantages. In high school, higher-level discussion usually came from adults with a wealth of experience and a wider historical view. Therefore, I was unable to contribute much of anything in the form of debate.

However, as I have gotten older, I have also gained experience and furthered my education on history and its effect on worldly issues. Having graduated twice from an American university, I can speak to the differences between high school and higher education.

THE BENEFITS FROM ATTENDING A UNIVERSITY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- being forced to interact with people outside established comfort zones

- discussing and analyzing hot-topic arguments and writing research papers in which it is required to take a side on a worldly issue and debate it effectively, regardless if it is your side

- living away from home forces one to challenge learned opinions of conformity, value systems, and helps create a personality that is arguably different than after graduating high school

- attending classes, often with no choice, that force university students to challenge their preconceived notions of the world (those obtained in high/secondary school)

According to the New York Times, roughly 30% of Americans hold a bachelor's degree. This means that 70% of Americans have not nurtured their critical thinking skills or challenged their own dogmas and have have likely lacked any exposure to opposing viewpoints(source). Of course, there are exceptions to this. Whether by peer-to-peer discussions or by research paper, university students were at least in minimal capacity forced to support a belief in something, cherished or not. I don't recall a single moment in high school studies which required me to analyze, in-depth, any kind of worldly issue, be it environmental, political, conservational, or religious in nature.

Therefore, it is likely safe to assume that there is a fair percentage of other high schools out there that also do not challenge their students in this way. Instead, we were often discouraged in high school from discussing these things, as a potential difference in a family's values could spark tensions between teachers, students, and community members that could result in a variety of legal issues.

Though I cannot deny that attending a university benefited me, universities also have limits with what they can offer students. No matter what their intentions, all students receive a biased education.

For example, according to the Oxford American Dictionary, the word Economy means: “a particular system which carefully manages available resources, even heat distribution and fuel economy: sparing or careful use of something."

You must understand that, by definition, we currently live in an Anti-economy. We extract resources from the earth faster than can be replenished naturally. We measure success by the amount of wealth we accumulate, the planet’s ecosystems are on the verge of collapse, and production and distribution are factored and determined solely on the bases of artificially created wants with no regard for the planet's health, its sustainability, or its renewable properties.

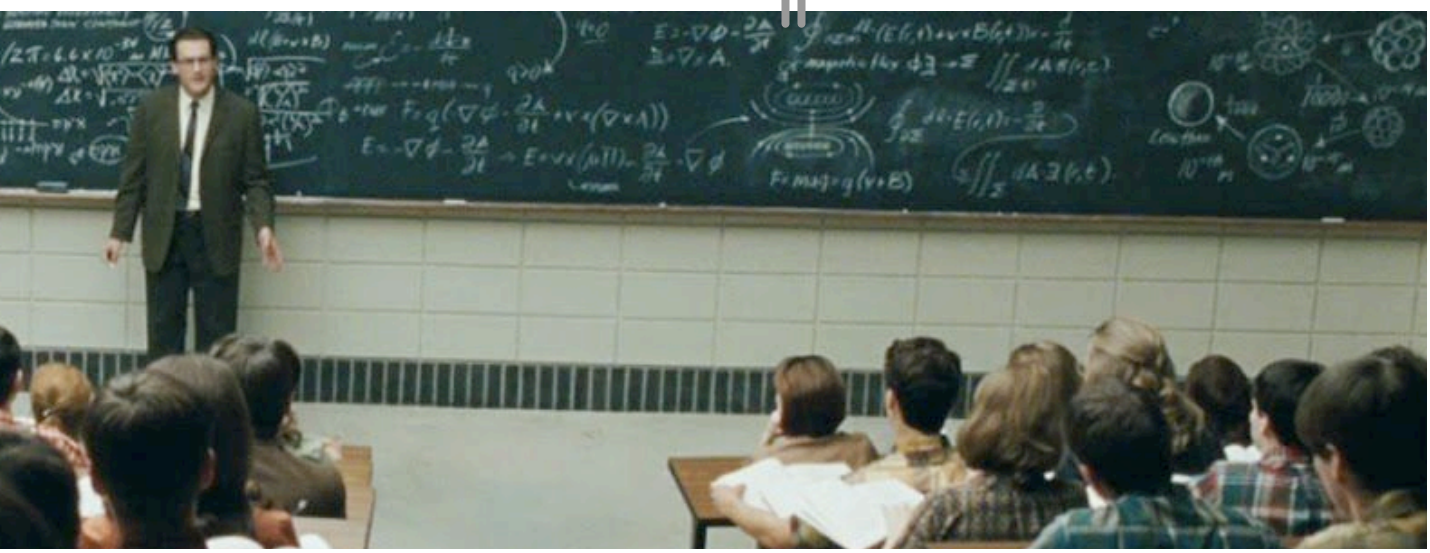
Our current economies, whether communism, socialism, capitalism, or any other recognizable form, are only successful when we plunder the earth for profit by making resources scarce, and therefore, more valuable.

This is a realization that a person arrives at through independent study that is usually not offered by university curriculum. If you pick up any textbook for science or ecology, it will not tell you that we live in an anti-economy.

Instead, what it will do is teach the reader to focus on the symptoms of problems, such as the way we currently extract resources from our planet and how doing so could create all sorts of future problems for the earth.

But it will not explicitly say that the entire system itself is designed this way on purpose—to exploit foreign countries for resources, to plunder the earth for profit, to ensure the survival of those with purchasing power, or any number of other unsustainable practices which are direct symptoms of an unsupportive and poorly designed system.

In addition, they certainly will not explicitly tell you that we have total energy abundance if renewable energies are properly used. They just play this off as the general corruption of a few.



I want to take this moment to explain what The Venus Project proposes as a solution to our current unsustainable economic model. It's called a Resource-Based Economy, representing an economy based upon access abundance, rather than scarcity. The earth has more than enough resources to provide for all the world's inhabitants.

Today, however, our current economic procedures are only functional if money can be made in some form through monetary transactions. If money can't be made, measures are often taken which artificially create the need for exchanging money. Bottled water is a perfect example of this. By polluting our waterways or by hindering people's access to water, corporations stand to gain immense profits by selling bottled water at exorbitant rates. Even ethical companies have little reason to invest in sanitation, filtration systems, or otherwise improve one's access to water.

This is why we see many corporations donating bottles of water to assist in crisis, but they do not donate long-term filtration devices, such as the Lifesaver Bottle or the Lifestraw. Furthermore, producing and distributing water in non-recyclable bottles when there is abundant water all around us is simply idiotic.

The Venus Project maintains that in a Resourced-Based Economy, all monetary transactions would be eliminated while ensuring that all goods and services are available to everyone, without the use of money, credits, barter, or any other form of debt or servitude. The various problems we are experiencing all around are not caused by poorly conceived legislation, incompetent leaders, or some a type of a fluke or fluctuating boom and bust cycles, as we are typically taught about economics.

The core of the economic system is intrinsically flawed. Everything we hear about... everything from poverty, pollution, unemployment, inflation, public health concerns, social destabilization, energy crisis, resource depletion, bailouts and other large scale debt defaults... are all inevitabilities of our flawed system. The reason they are inevitabilities is because profit is derived from scarcity. The scarcity of resources make them more valuable, i.e., the less of something there is, the more that can be charged for it... which is precisely why commodities like diamonds are said to be valuable and is also why there are many instances of fraudulent hoarding and the stockpiling of newly mined diamonds or other resources to jack-up their prices.

This happens all across the board and, again, explains why we look to solving problems by bottling water. According to The Venus Project, "It is not money that people need, but rather it is freedom of access to most of their necessities without ever having to appeal to a government bureaucracy or any other agency. In a resource-based economy money would become irrelevant."

To sum that up, it's apparent that the overwhelming majority of crimes worldwide are monetarily related: non-violent crimes such as prostitution, issues relating to pornography and illegal drug sales; theft crimes like burglaries, muggings, theft from stores, online piracy,

property related crimes, stealing cars, and even some murders; large-scale financial crimes like embezzlement, fraud, ponzi schemes, and even governmental crimes like war (theft of resources). All of these crimes, and many more, have an underlying monetary causality. Taking this into consideration, removing money and providing for the needs of all people would eliminate poverty, while declaring all the world's resources as the common heritage of all the world's people, in a scientifically planned way, would make war obsolete, and crime would exist solely as an anomaly in society.

This is a substantial part of what The Venus Project has been studying for decades and is also why The Venus Project proposes that we change our economic system to reflect the sustainable model provided by the Resource-Based Economy approach. Sadly, these ideas are not taught to students or even adequately discussed in universities, because these new proposals go against everything that these universities know. They don't teach school students to question the current system or the constraints that we grow up supporting. Elementary and high school teachers do not ask their students, "Please design an alternative system to capitalism."

Of course, prior knowledge would first need to be accessed and explained to students in a relatable way for them to do this. For example, we could say that, "Farmland will continue to disappear as cities get larger and larger, which will affect our ability to grow food. What would you propose as a solution to this agricultural problem of disappearing land?"

You can see that kids, being creative, might suggest we could grow crops on top of roof tops, or even build vertical farms. But even if teachers had time to pose these types of questions, they are still not likely to be posed because we have been taught conformity in the school system and to just accept what we see around us.

This is why we need a major revamp of our current educational system. Rather than mining students' minds for a particular commodity, we need to instead nurture creativity and encourage students to succeed in more ways than just the so-called core subjects. Currently, "Every country on earth is reforming public education," according to Sir Ken Robinson (source). This is being done partly to account for globalization.

The problem with this is that "we are meeting the challenges of the future by using what was done in the past," (source). "The previous generation was taught that if they went to school and got educated, they would get a job. The youth of today no longer believes this to be true," (source). The availability of jobs throughout the world continues to decrease as our technology increases.

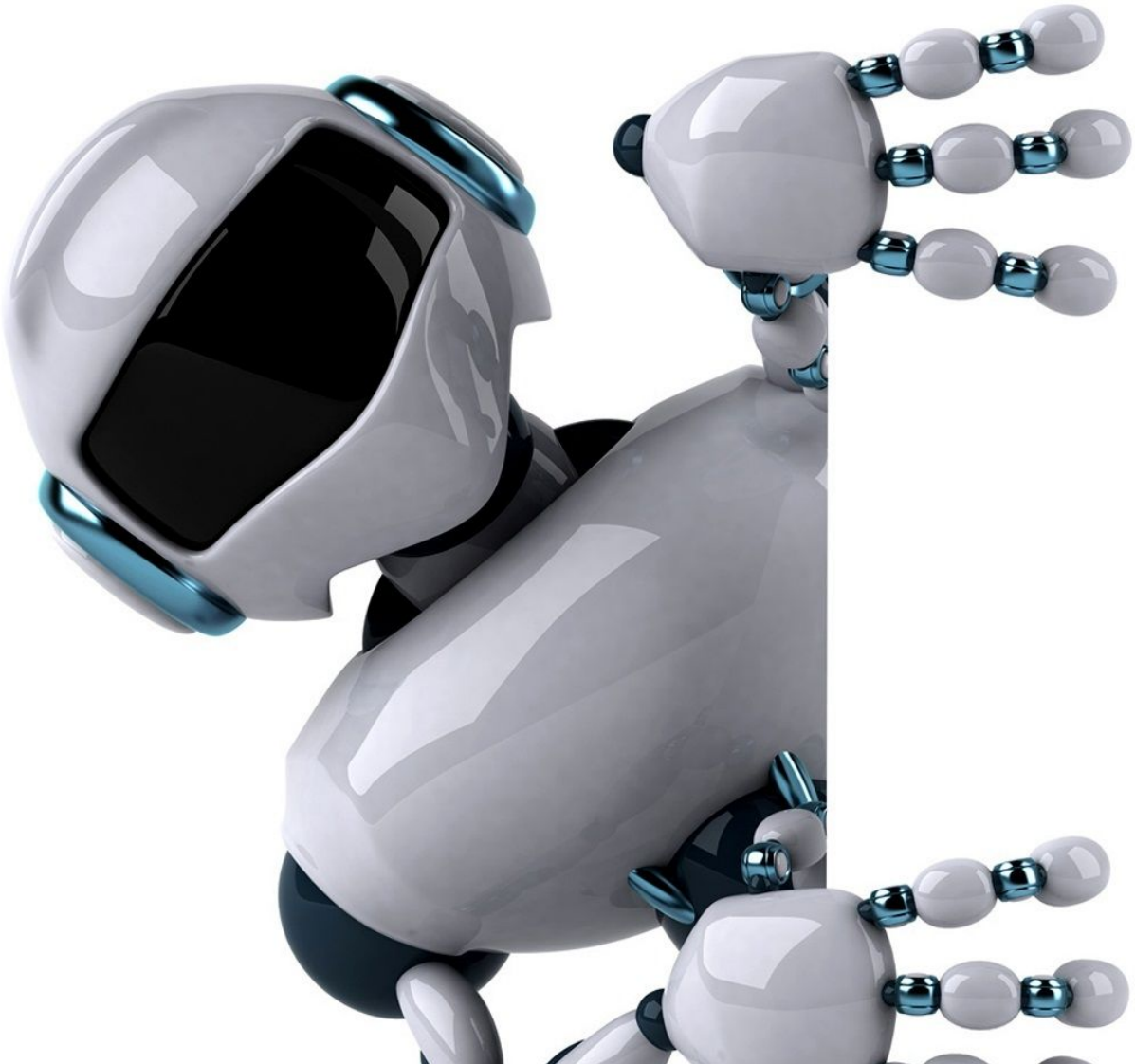
The opportunity for an individual to achieve their dream job is getting smaller and smaller within every future generation. This is especially true for people who pursue the arts.

Thanks to efficient mechanization, many of the jobs that teachers have been training students for are being systematically replaced. Our system for educating students has not kept pace with the implementation of mechanization, while many countries around the world are seeing an increase in the amount of students attending and graduating from universities. "The more students that pass through the system and succeed, the less valuable university degrees become. It's called academic inflation," (source).

This phenomenon explains what is currently happening in countries like Poland, where a bachelors degree once qualified a person for a job, now these same employees have earned a Masters degree to try to set themselves apart from their competition and coworkers.

I have taught many adult students, many of whom even worked in a retail store, who all had masters degrees. In America, a person with a master's degree might be considered overqualified for retail.

In summary, the education system currently in use all over the world was created for a different age, one that is far behind the advancements society has made since the Industrial Revolution. Our technology and access to information has altered student's attention spans. The American population has more than tripled since the Industrial Revolution and jobs have steadily been replaced by machines. This process is accelerating. We are using biased curriculum, which is hand-picked by bureaucrats with no educational qualifications, to educate students about an unpredictable future with 19th-century thinking.

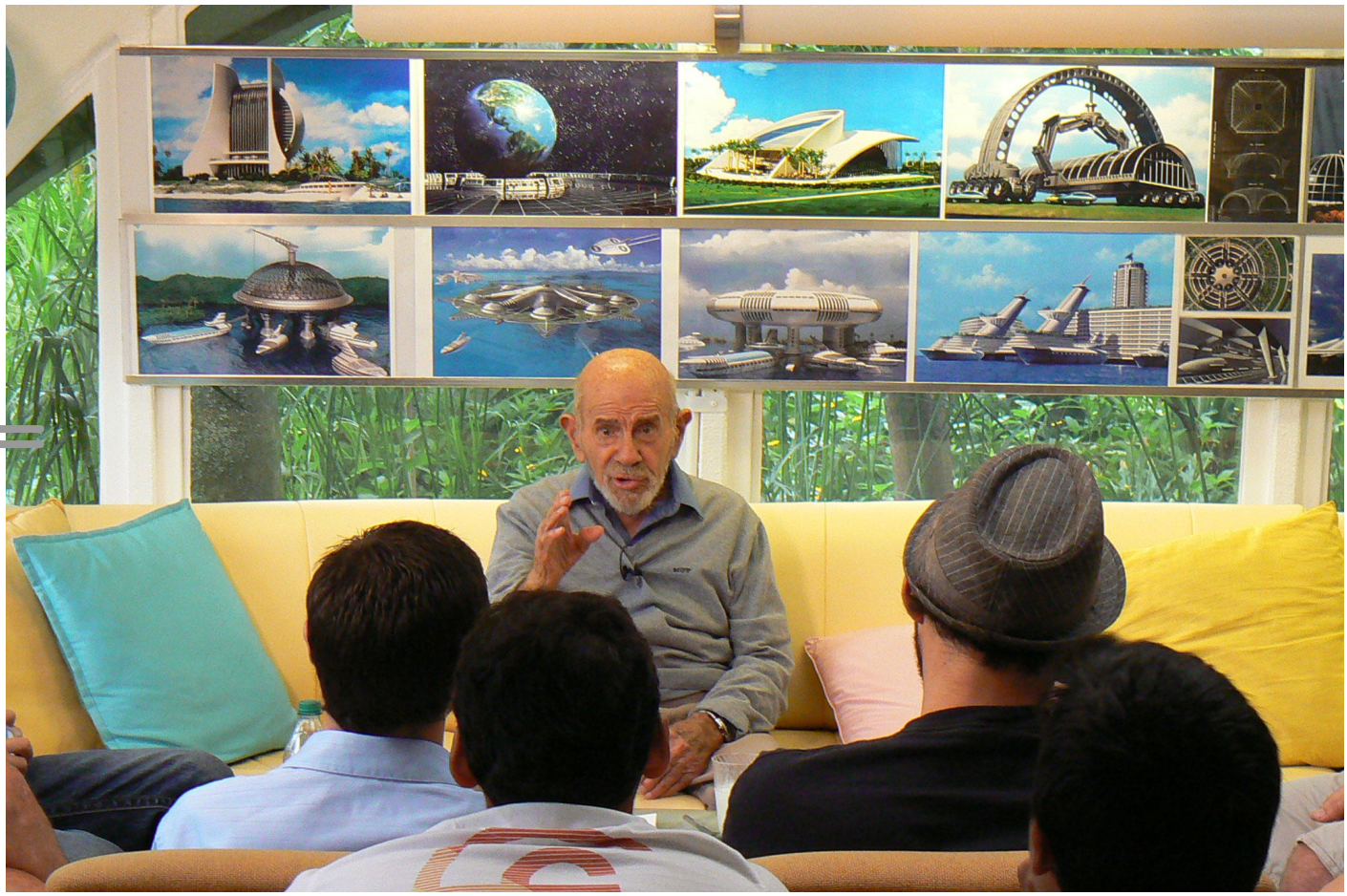


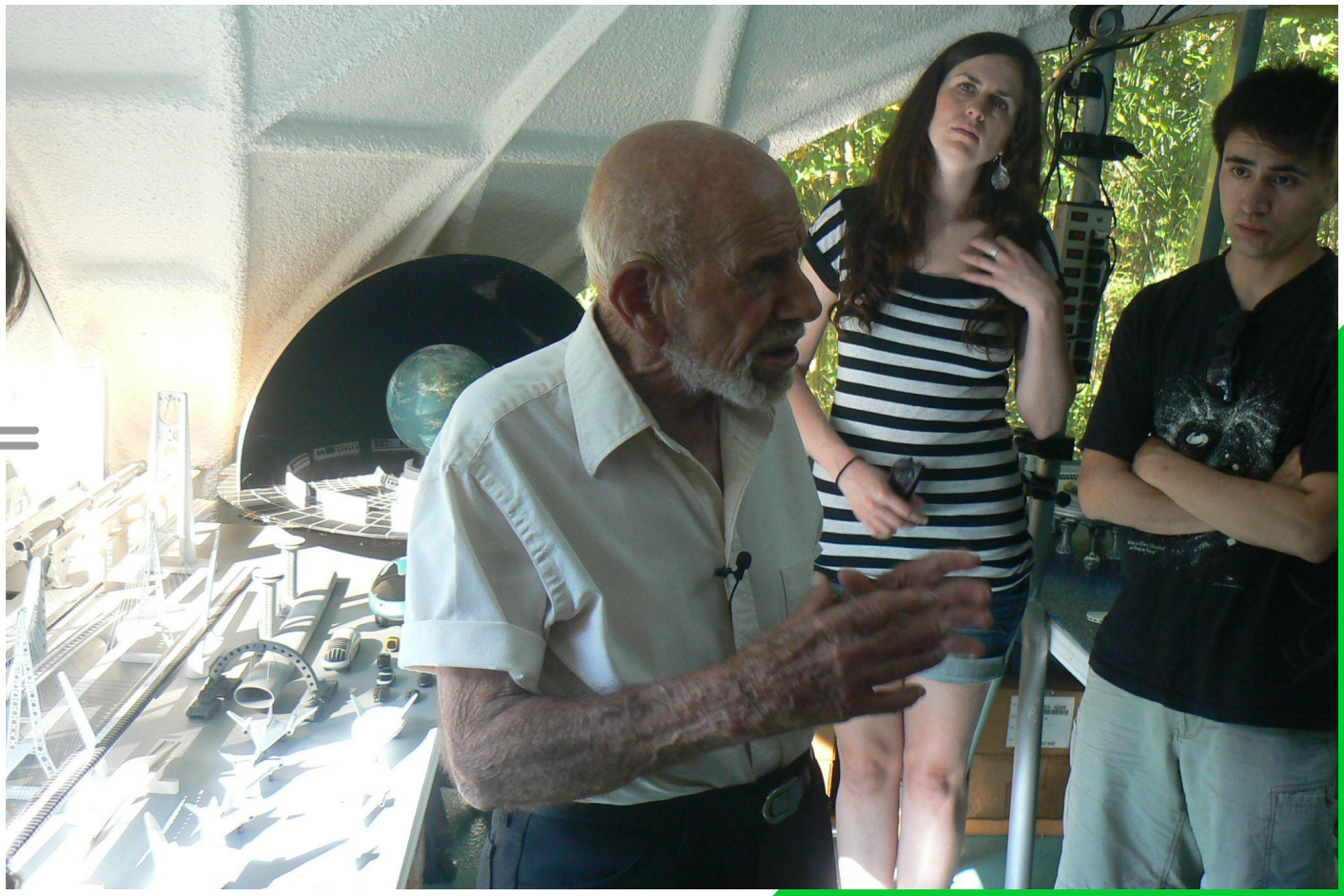
Clearly it's time we revamp the way we educate people. Clearly it's time for a change. In a Venus Project city, all decisions pertaining to educational policy would be made by those most qualified to make them and would not be made to ensure a financial or hierarchical gain.

The stress that plagues humanity today exists mostly due to the fact that in addition to actually living their lives, people also have to earn a living. In a TVP city, with people having the basic necessities of life taken care of, such as food, water, housing, transportation, and energy, people could then devote more time to undergoing extensive research and training on how to properly educate people without worrying about making a living.

If jobs and bills were eliminated from one's life, nearly all stress would be eliminated along with them. No longer needing a job to support one's family would mean parents could spend more time at home. They would be able to spend more time with their kids, now that they are free of financial stress, creating much healthier environments from which to raise children. The education of the people would thus improve drastically based on this alone. I believe the majority of fathers would not abandon their children or wives on account that financial hardships and elitism policies would not exist. I believe kids would no longer feel the need to join gangs or be encouraged to abuse drugs because their home environment would be more supportively structured. Sexual education would provide people with the necessary knowledge to avoid unplanned births, simultaneously reducing the amount of teenage pregnancies, single moms and overall global population growth.

Finally, now that people won't have to earn a living, many fields will record a steady increase in productivity, as they could devote more focus and attention to advanced research, scientific fieldwork, industrial design, engineering projects and even medical research without worrying about their own emotional baggage or finding sources of funding and resources for such projects.





OCCUPY

While many thorough reports already indicate that money is not a good motivator, money would no longer exist and, therefore, a mental dependency on its use would also not exist in future generations. Children growing up in a Venus Project city would be far more intelligent than today's people because of these factors and it could give rise to many more brilliant minds than ever before in human history. The school systems would reflect his new humanistic approach to education.

People of the future will look back at how we 'used to' operate our education system and wonder how any civilization could fathom preparing kids for jobs and not for knowledge, philosophy, or humanistic endeavors. Rather than extinguishing critical thinking, it would be encouraged. More emphasis would be placed on smaller children.

They would be recognized as the intellectual sponges they are, capable of learning multiple languages and anything else we can challenge them with. Schools will no longer offer books to read which are intellectually worthless.

Jacque Fresco has said that literature, such as Farmer Brown books that teach kids information like: "'Moo Moo,' said the cow; 'Bah Bah,' said the sheep", would be replaced by more relevant academic subject matter, such as languages, for example. By passively preventing a child access to materials that encourage critical, analytical, and divergent thinking, students are subtly taught conformity by the current school system.

Today's children then must rely on parents for their answers, and the parents typically get their answers from interpreting television news and media.

The Venus Project will instead focus on real knowledge and problem solving that will ensure the human, animal, and planetary systems are maintained with the utmost care and intelligence.

In order to accomplish this, we need to address the whole system and completely rethink it, taking into account a newer age and the modernization of culture and of technology.

This is the future that The Venus Project offers, as more people become a part of it.

FAQ

with Jacque Fresco and Roxanne Meadows

HOW CAN THE USE OF LAWS BE ELIMINATED?

Today we try to control human behavior by enacting laws or signing treaties without changing the physical conditions responsible for aberrant behavior. When Earth's resources are seen as the common heritage of all people, irrelevant laws and social contracts will vanish.

In a resource-based economy, social responsibility would not be a function of artificial laws or force. Safeguards against abuse could be designed into the environment. An example of this is the proposed design of cities where people have free access to resources without debt. This would eliminate theft. Such measures are not a matter of passing and enforcing laws to prevent and punish abuse. Rather, they are a means of designing the flaws out of any social venture, thus eliminating the need for many laws.

We are proposing doing away with the systems that cause corruption and human suffering in the first place. In a city with safe, clean, mass transportation, we do not need police to monitor drivers' speed, behavior at stop signs, or proper papers.

Other examples are the air and the water. Although both are necessary to our well-being and survival, there are no laws regulating how many breaths are taken per hour because we have such abundance at this time. No one monitors a gushing spring to see how much water is taken from it, although fresh water is absolutely necessary for the support of life. If it is abundant, no one monitors it.

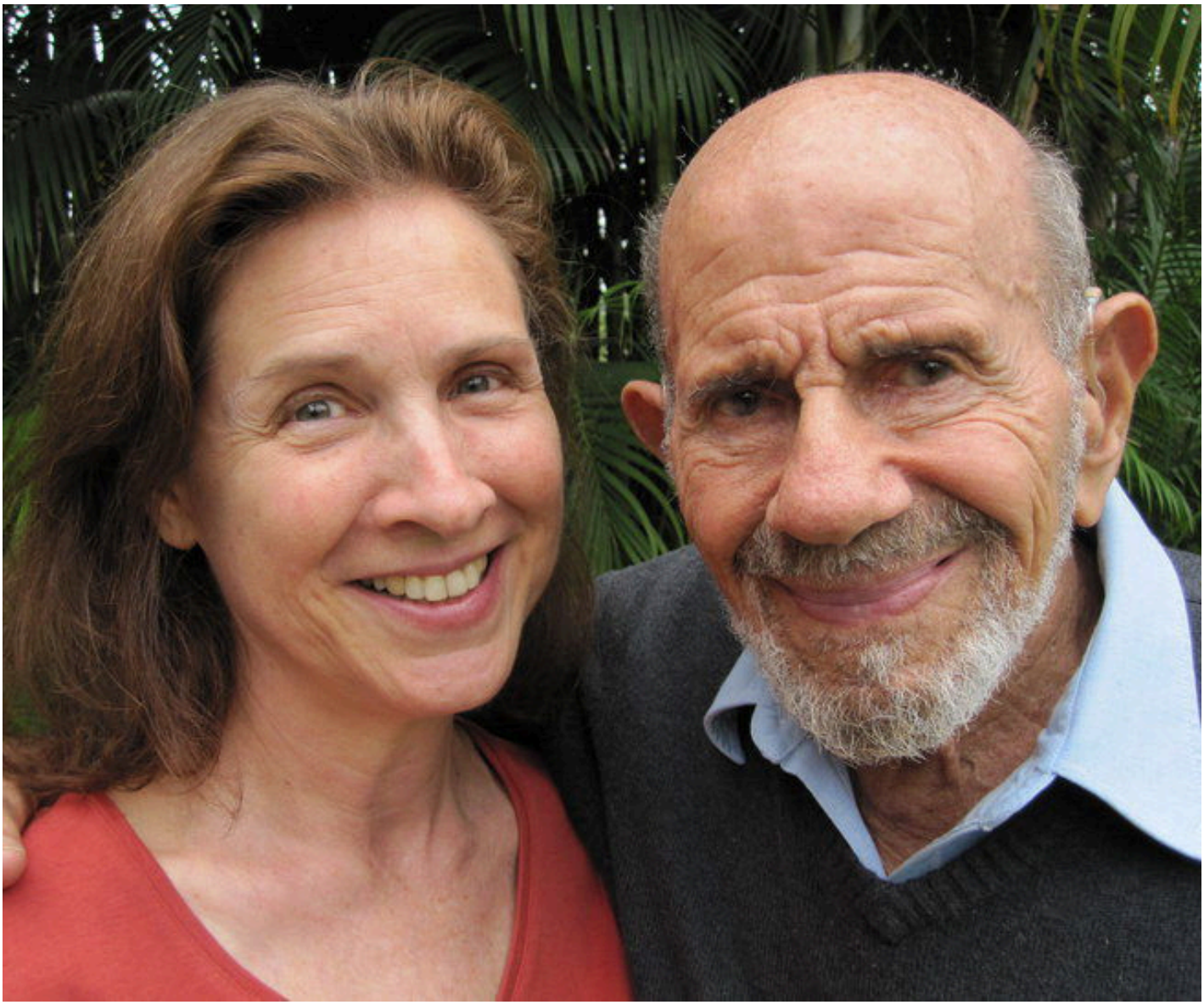
I must emphasize that this approach to global governance has nothing in common with the present aims of an elite few to form a world government with themselves at the helm, and with the vast majority subservient to them. This newer vision of globalization empowers every person on the planet to be all they can be, without living in abject subjugation to a corporate governing body.

A society with human concern "designs out" laws and proclamations by making all things available to all people, regardless of race, color, or creed. When governments make laws, we are led to believe that these laws are made to enhance people's lives. In truth, laws are byproducts of insufficiency.

The question is, "can we grow beyond thinking that "someone" has to make decisions for us?"

A better understanding of natural law involves human's relationship to the environment, which supports all life. All of nature is subservient to natural law. Natural law cannot be violated without serious consequences to individuals or societies. Natural laws dominate all living systems. For example, without water, sun, or nutrients, plants and animals die.

An environment of scarcity, hunger, and poverty is a threat to everyone.



offensive and obscene

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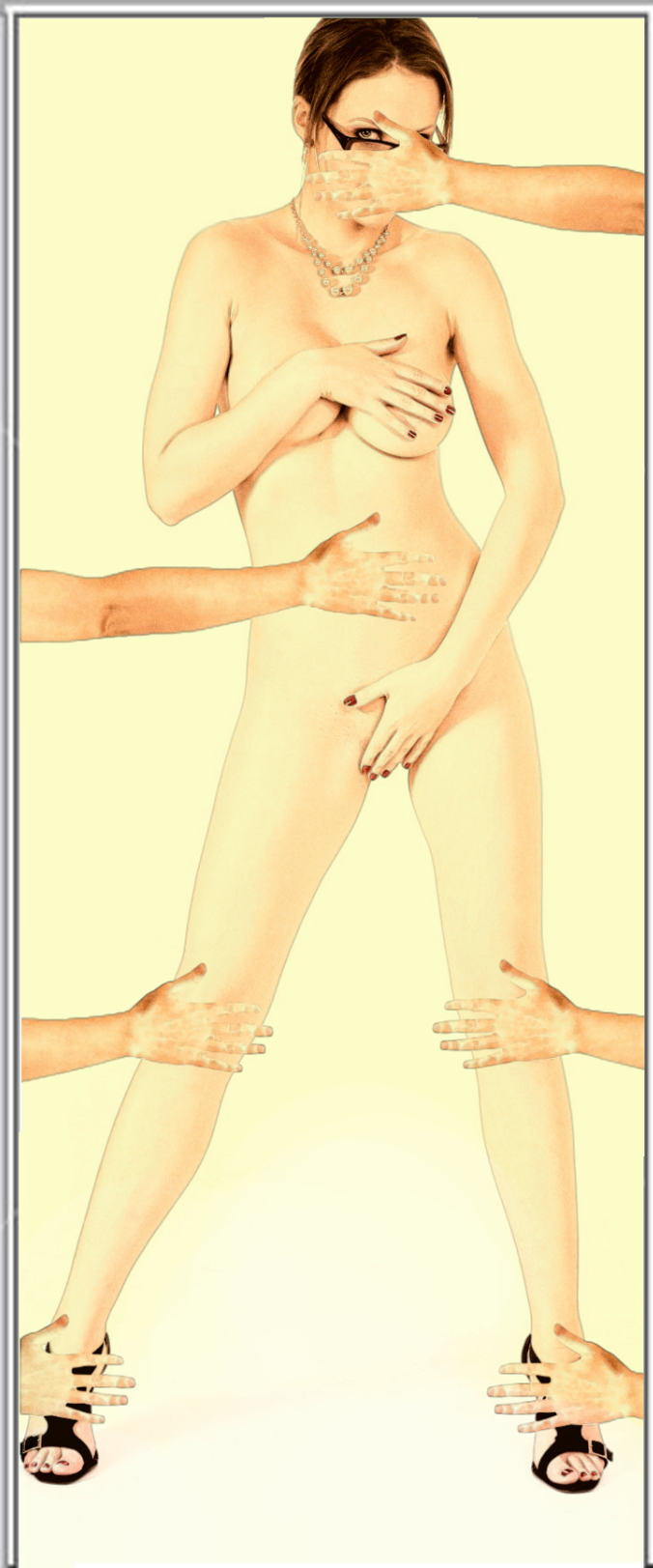


"If people were just as offended by war as they are about showing genitalia it would save a lot of lives."

Jacque Fresco

In our last issue, we discussed 'morality' and 'ethics' idea(l)s, showing how they are notions without a proper meaning. Today we will discuss the notion of obscenity and what causes people to feel offended.

Last month, we posted a promotional TVPMag image across all of the official TVP social networks that was only banned from Facebook, by the Facebook staff. We post images every single day of the year, promoting articles from this magazine. However, this particular photo was removed because it included something called 'nudity'. Here is Facebook's official statement, which is very important for this article:

"*A photo or post on your Timeline was reported to Facebook. After reviewing the report, we determined that the photo or post doesn't follow the Facebook Community Standards: Nudity*

Facebook restricts displays of nudity because some audiences within our global community are particularly sensitive to this type of content. We understand that these limitations will sometimes affect content shared for legitimate reasons, including awareness campaigns or artistic projects, and we apologize for the inconvenience. We're constantly re-evaluating how to balance people's interest in free expression with the needs of our diverse, global community."

The picture showed exposed 'female milk glands', as a side effect of the Swaziland's clothing tradition where women do not wear a bra.

THIS IS THE PHOTO:

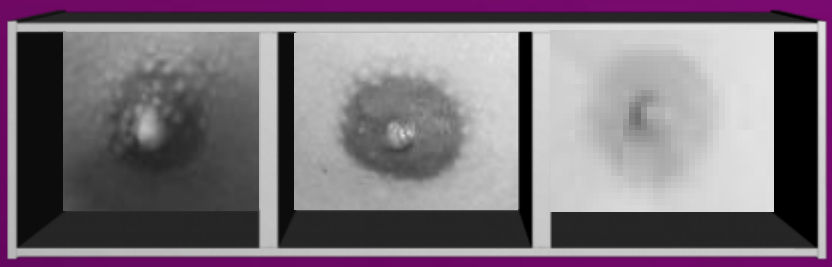
The image text provided this relevant message: *"In Swaziland, a poor tribe in our modern tribes world, it is illegal for women to wear clothes that resemble men's clothes. If they are caught wearing such clothes, they are subject to having them forcibly ripped off of them by soldiers, and humiliated."* The message was a very important one, but the emotionally-driven reaction to a somehow offensive pair of 'boobs' stopped the message from being spread.

The irony is that this picture represented an article from TVPM about 'morality' and 'ethics', and how the present system is as coercive and as ass-backwards as the ancient world when it comes to such judgements. Facebook proved that more than any picture could ever have hoped to achieve. Because of this incident, we have to manually censor any such image from now on so that our Facebook account won't be removed.

As we have shown in the 'morality' article, many companies/organizations/clusters of people have been actively trying to impose their own values onto others through such tools like the internet, restrictive laws, or whatever else they find appropriate to impose their own ideals.

On the other hand, that post was flagged as inappropriate by someone who saw it, and we have to wonder what this person thinks of as being inappropriate. Why did this person think that this digital representation of this certain 'thing' (a celebration dance) was obscene (bad) and, for that matter, what is 'obscene' after all?

If you were to look at nipples close-up, you often wouldn't be able to tell if they are female nipples or male nipples. The 'bulges' of the typical female breast are also not specific to females when it comes to how they look. Take a look at the pictures below and try to guess which nipple/'bulge' belongs to a woman and which ones belong to a man. Click the photo to see who is



Have you guessed right? Perhaps not, since it's hard to tell sometimes. I am left wondering why so many in this world regard female chests as 'obscene' but male's chests as completely normal. It's a bizarre contradiction with no apparent justification.

At the same time we posted that image on Facebook, it just so happened that a very well-known Facebook page called "I fucking love science", which has over 18 million likes, posted a news item from their website that asked "Have you ever wondered why men have nipples?" and included a big picture of a man's naked chest.

Our post showing naked female chests was removed, but their post was not (and I promise that we're not at all jealous of that).

So, imagine that you are a guy just changing your shirt alone in your own bedroom, when suddenly your sister bursts into the room and accidentally sees your naked chest. Your manliness is now destroyed! Your sister saw your nipples. How creepy is that, right? Well, I don't know anyone who would be emotionally impacted by such an event, since it's a 'normality' in this world for guys to walk around without a shirt. How crazy is the idea for us to socially 'force' guys to wear a bra from now on? Well, then ask yourself why it is 'normal' for girls to be socially forced to wear a bra.

Now, imagine the opposite situation: a girl changing in her room and her brother bursting in and seeing her naked 'bulges' with nipples. The girl will definitely be ashamed by this incident. Perhaps even more interestingly, so will her brother. If this wasn't allowed by us to be such a taboo, it wouldn't be able to emotionally hurt anyone.

If you look across human history, human beings started to wear 'clothes' of some sort around 72,000 years ago, and it is thought that the primary causation was the utility factor (cold, rain, protection from the elements, etc).

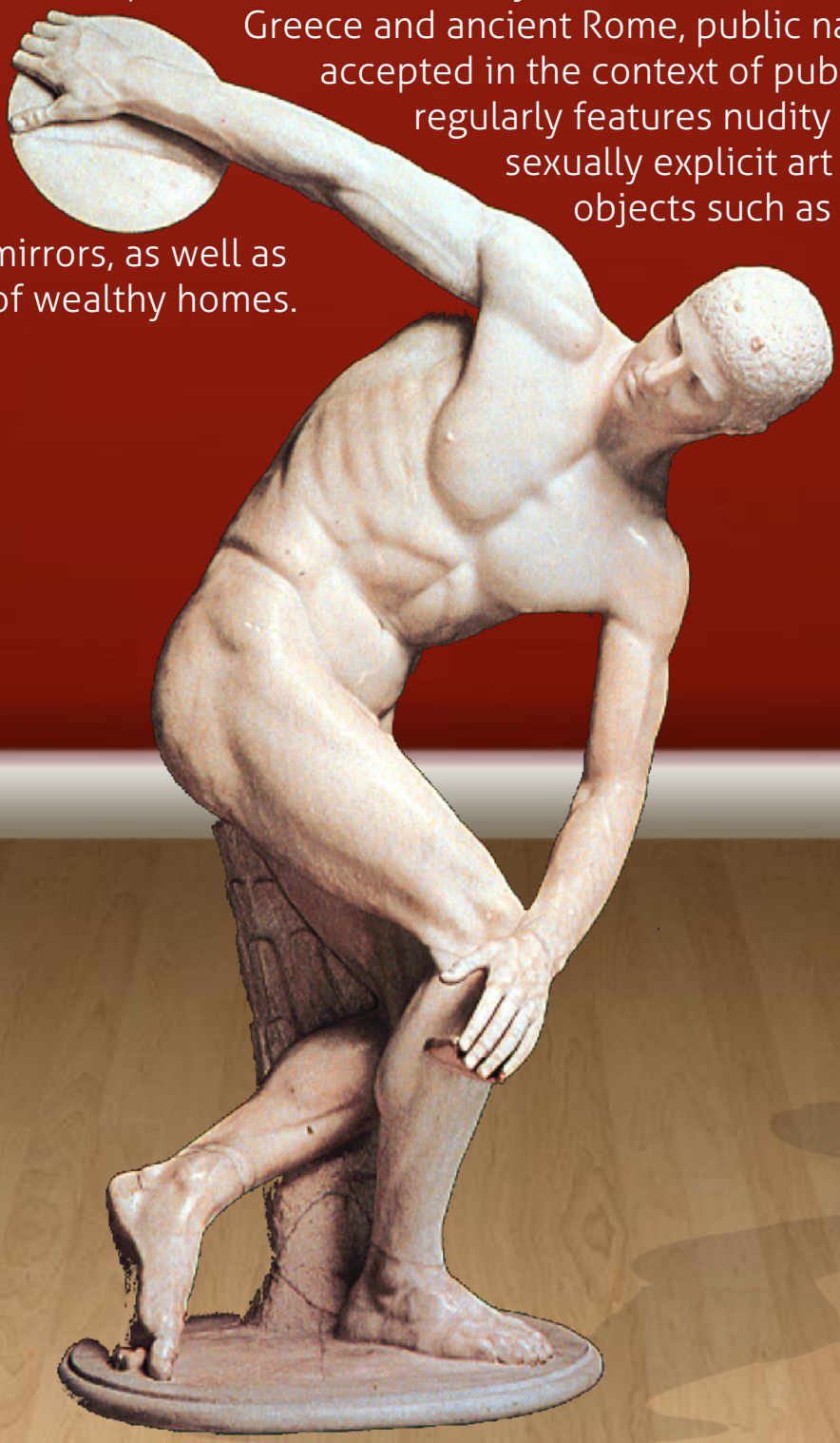
Clothes served a very real function (unlike in some cases today). For about 128,000 years before that, however, it is thought that humans did not wear clothes at all (maybe because we had much more body hair protecting us, we hadn't yet migrated far from warm climates, etc.).

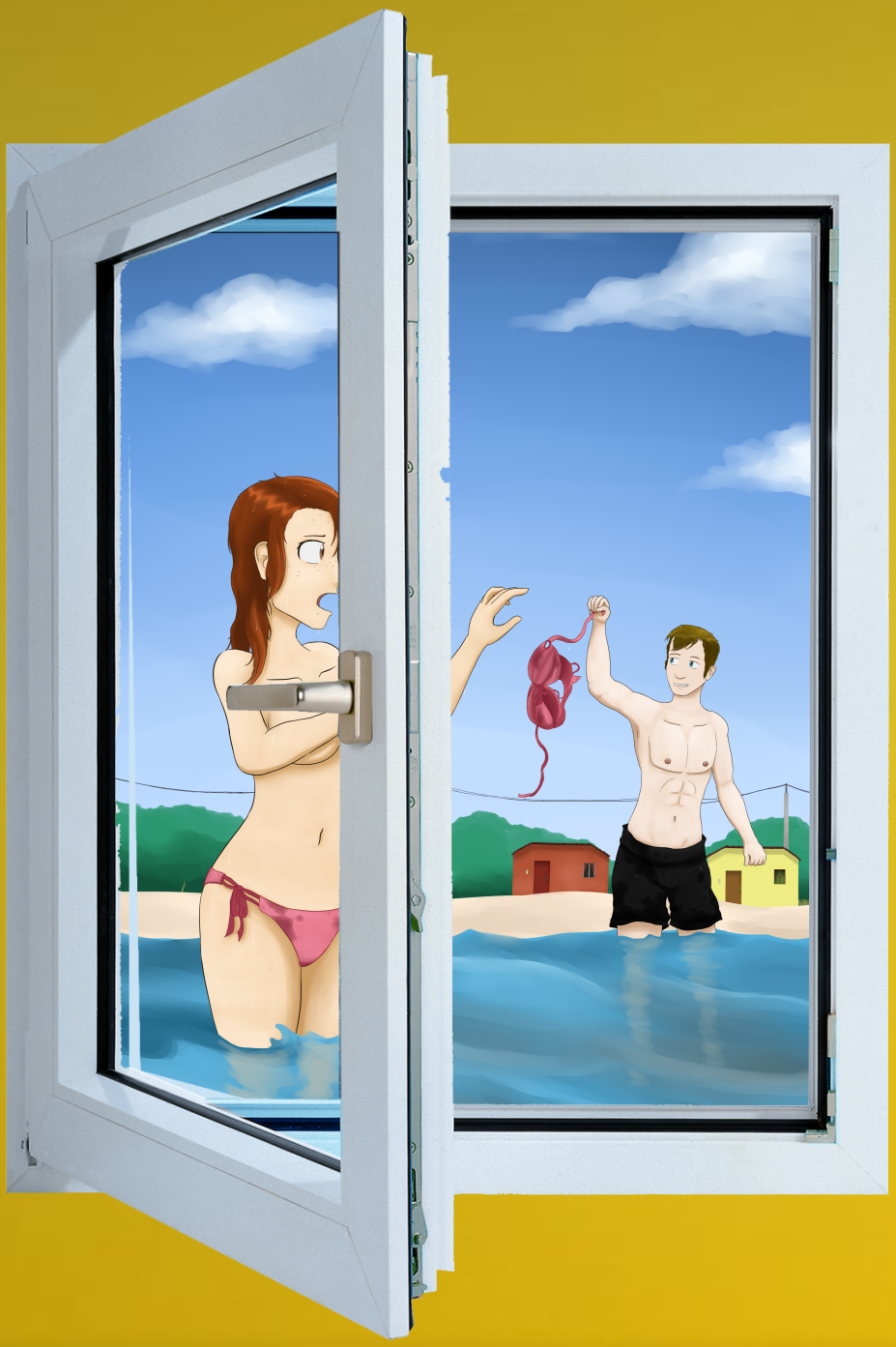
From this perspective alone, it is 'unnatural' to wear clothes, yet going without would not be a smart decision for many present day societies living in a plethora of climates where clothes still serve a very necessary function.

In ancient Egypt (5,000 years ago), clothing was much simpler. Women wore transparent robes and children went without clothing until puberty, at about age 12. Many street performers performed nude in that period of time.

In ancient Greece (2,000 years ago), athletic and/or cultist nudity of men and boys – and less frequently, of women and girls – was a natural concept. Athletes competed naked in public sporting events. Spartan women, as well as men, would sometimes be naked in public processions and festivals. In the case of women, this practice was designed to encourage virtue while the men were away at war. Nudity in sport was very common, with almost all sports performed naked. The word gymnasium actually comes from the Ancient Greek term *gym nós*, meaning "naked"(source). In all of this, such events were intended to promote appreciation of the human body and were regarded as 'esthetical' offering to the gods.

In Greek culture, depictions of erotic nudity were considered normal. In both ancient Greece and ancient Rome, public nakedness was also accepted in the context of public bathing. Roman art regularly features nudity in mythological scenes, and sexually explicit art appeared on ordinary objects such as serving vessels, lamps, and mirrors, as well as among the art collections of wealthy homes.



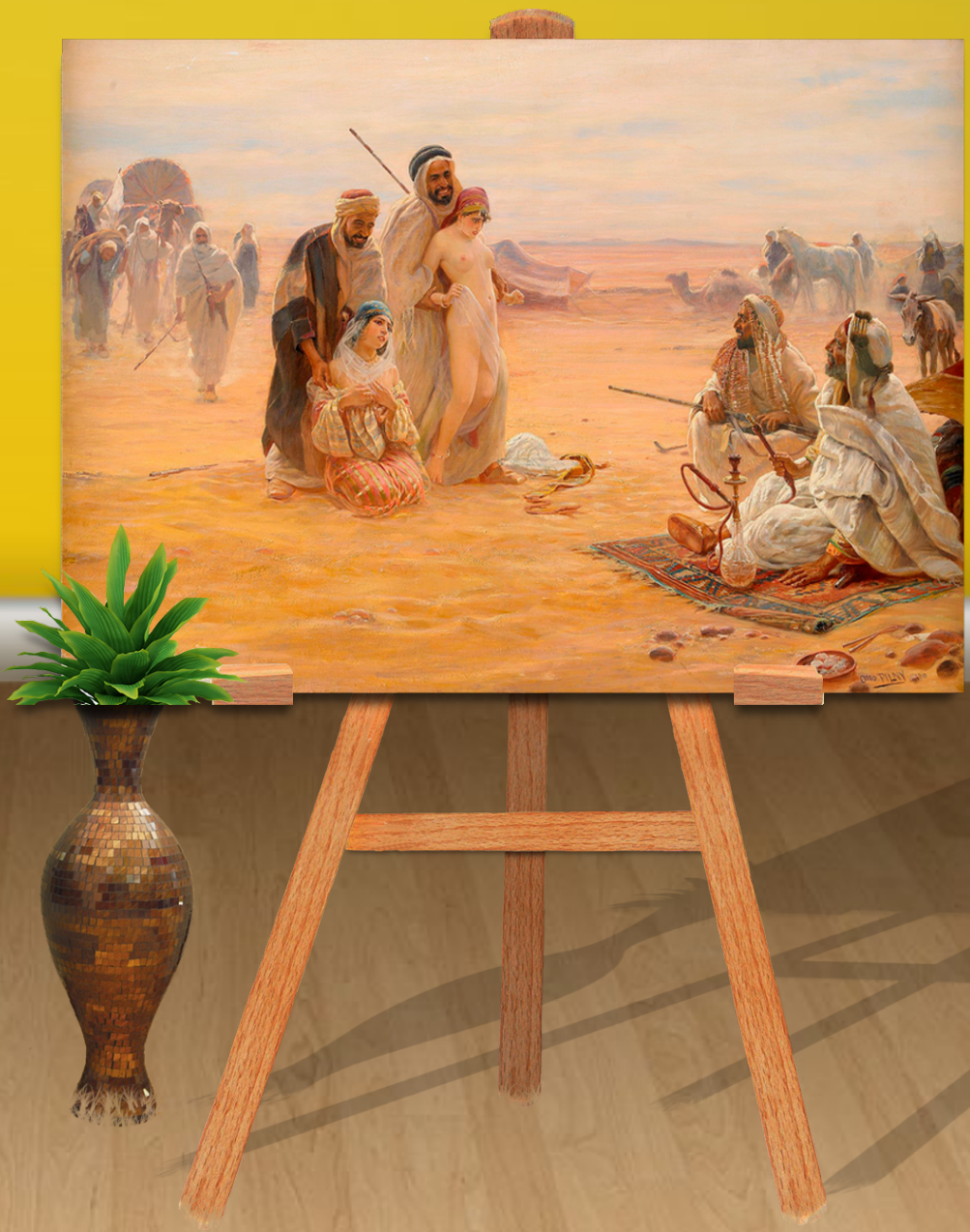


In more recent history, in the early 20th century, exposure of male nipples was considered indecent at some beaches. During this period, women's bathing suits had to cover at least the thighs and exposure of more than that could lead to arrests for public lewdness. But after WWII, the arrival of the bikini was quickly accepted with relatively few complaints.

In the 1920's, the Soviet Union under Stalin, by then a well-known tribe of the world, decided to suppress the 'radical' ideas that had circulated in the early years of the Soviet Union: Nudism and pornography became prohibited.

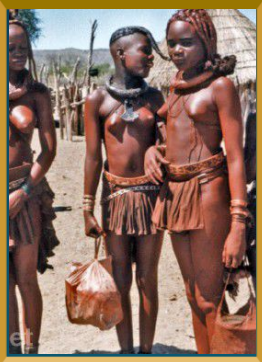
History goes on and you can read this Wikipedia article, where you can reflect on a religious influence regarding the human naked body becoming viewed as 'sinful' or 'obscene'.

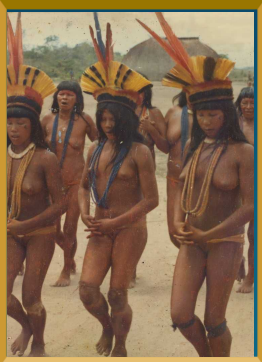
However, religion was not the only influence on these notions. In ancient Rome, they started to associate nakedness with being poor or weak. This was partly because in war, prisoners were often stripped naked in an attempt to humiliate and convince them that they were no longer in control of their body. Also, slaves were displayed naked to be inspected for 'defects'. These kinds of associations defined 'nakedness' as offensive and degrading.



Complete nudity among men and complete or near-complete nudity among women is still common for many communities and social systems (Mursi, Surma, Nuba, Karimojong, Kirdi, and so on). Many indigenous peoples in Africa and South America train and perform sport competitions naked. Indian male Digambara monks practice yoga naked, and there are millions of people all over the world that 'practice' naturism/nudism.

In some warm climate hunter-gatherer cultures, nudity or near-complete nudity either has been (until the introduction of Western Culture or Islam), or still is, the social norm for both men and women. It seems that powerful clusters of people, such as 'Western Culture' and Islam, are forcing their ideals upon other cultures and changing these notions.





There are so many tribes in the world that do not wear clothes, where guys do not get instant erections when they see naked girls, and girls don't gawk at boy's penises or other parts of the body.

We might expect that if we were to suddenly abandon clothes right now, we would start raping each other, and that might actually be true, but it's only because of the culture we were raised in. Perhaps people from such tribes look at us, 'the so-called modern' ones, and ponder how sick we are.

Some people believe that breasts and genitelia are the 'obscene' parts of the human body everywhere, but if you burst into a room where there is a naked girl, she will cover her genitalia if she is from America or many other parts of the Western culture world, she will cover her face and hair if she is from the islamic world, her ankles if she is from the Victorian e ra or the back of her neck if she is from Japan.

Sex and nudity are not the only offensive offenders. I remember all through my school years that teachers would act offended if we wore a cap/hat in the classroom. Even if it was very cold (winter) and we wore winter caps to help keep us warm, the teachers would force us to take them off. If you tried to argue with them about it, you could find yourself in even more trouble. So, people can feel offended just by the way you dress, or talk.

At one point in the 20th century, in the early days of television, it was quite rude (and even prohibited) to show a bathroom on TV. If you need a source for that claim, just watch your local TV stations to see many 'prohibited' things due to 'offensive' reasons.

In America, there is a small group of people that establish the rating system for all the movies that go into theatre or TV. You may have heard that some movies are not suited for certain ages, while others are. Well, only a handful of people (less than 20) are responsible for assigning these ratings to everything. What they do is basically watch these movies/documentaries and, based on their own judgements, they say which are suited for different audiences. They even have two priests as among their members.

In the documentary "This Film is Not Yet Rated", this organization (the Motion Picture Association of America's Classification and Ratings Administration, or MPAA CARA) was brought into the spotlight to show the ridiculosity of their judgements. One interesting conflict occurred when a documentary maker created a documentary about war and soldiers, depicting images with real violence and the soldiers they filmed used 'normal' language, meaning they sweared, cursed, talked 'dirty', etc..

Since it is a documentary, the producer presented that situation as it was, but the 'rating judges' wanted to make his documentary not suited for people under 17, censoring it. Think about that a minute. A documentary must present reality as it is. Imagine if you were to censor footage of the world's genocides or the real plight of starving children, just because some people are 'sensitive' and refuse to witness that. Doing this greatly warps the reality that's presented to people. That same association allows penises to be shown in movies, but only to a certain degree for certain ages. If the penis is at a different angle or state of erection (a very natural phenomenon), then it is considered pornography. However, these systems fail miserably, because if you censor the word 'fuck' with a blip, not only will no one stop saying that word, but that 'blip' then becomes the new 'fuck'.

There are people who feel offended when they see others naked or people enjoying each other's bodies, yet they too have a naked body and they probably have sex somewhat frequently. In Romania, the interior of churches is full of orgy paintings, yet people become offended if you attempt to talk about sex inside those churches, or wherever. Parents don't let their children watch certain kinds of programs or hear certain words, yet the parents (and often the children themselves) use these 'dirty' words everyday.

These examples seem to prove just how hypocritical a lot of people have allowed themselves to become.

Here's a real story I read once about a guy who was with his wife at a streaptease bar in Thailand. The woman said, "You've noticed honey that I am the only girl in here that would not take clothes off for money?", and the husband replied, "Well, it depends how much one is willing to pay you...". The woman felt quite offended.

If you offer a girl $100 to have sex with you, she would probably slap you across the face (if she is from an American middle class family; if she is from a poor family and culture, then she might be quite happy at the opportunity). If you offer the same American girl $1,000, she might be inclined to consider it. For $1,000,000, she might even replace that 'offended' feeling with a 'proud' feeling about herself (her newly acquired 'wealth'). Check out this video of a guy doing just that, as part of a social experiment:

I saw a movie once that seemed to reflect this culture pretty well, especially one particular scene from it (the movie was also inspired by real events). An underage girl (16 or so) had a relationship with a 'mature' guy (40 or so). The police were looking for this guy to arrest him for underage sexual relationships, but the girl refused to give the police any details about him, in order to protect him. She was saying that she loves him and their relationship is a great one. Then the police showed the girl some pictures with this guy that depicted him having similar relations with other underage girls. After seeing that, the girl screamed: "He raped me! The son of a bitch! He raped me!", and she gave all the details to the cops. The girl wasn't offended or felt raped before she learned that the guy had other relationships.

It seems that most of the things that hurt people are their own personal projections. If you take the time to think seriously about it, words are only sounds. So how is it possible that any word can make you feel bad? How can a sound be allowed to piss you off?

In Romania, I had a neighbor who had a dog that barked every time time I passed in front of his house. The dog barked like crazy, but for me, his barking was only noise. If I was pissed off by anything, it was only because of the high noise he made (they hurt my ears a bit). I never considered stopping to try to argue with the dog, right? I view many people as barkers in this world. They say things that make no sense at all, and then you have to ask yourself why you are trying to argue or feel offended by barking?

If someone starts to curse at me in Japanese, I won't know what he means. In that same way, if someone starts to say nonsense things at me, I don't know what he or she means, either.

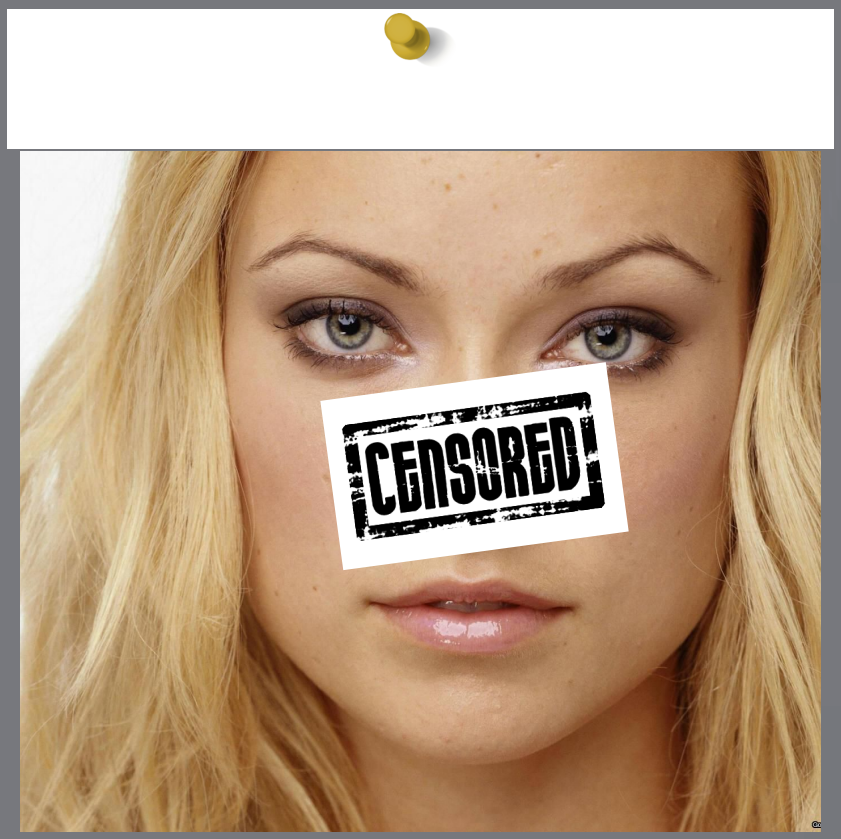
In many parts of the world, calling someone 'gay' is still considered an offensive thing to do. But let's think this through a little. If you are not gay, then what is the problem in the first place? And, if you are, then you are; so what?

If you go to a doctor and the doctor says "I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but you have a brain tumor." Would you say to the doctor "You and your family have brain tumors, you son of a bitch!"?

Of course not. Then how can you get pissed off if someone tells you that you are a moron or weirdo? Are you? Do those words mean anything to your life situation? If not, then how could you feel offended?

I would like to challenge anyone that reads this article to send me an email and try to make me feel offended. I have no idea what could make me feel like that. If I was a black guy and someone said to me "You filthy nigger!", I would feel nothing because those words mean nothing. If someone would say "Look man, I read somewhere that black skin is more prone to 'bad' smells when exposed to sunlight.", then I would thank the guy and read more about it. Maybe he knows something I wasn't aware of.

Get it?



Let's go back to our banned Facebook image with those 'indecent' breasts. In order to more fully comprehend the extent of the tremendous stupidity around what happened there, imagine that the world was more Islamic than whatever else, and we had posted an image of someone's face with her nose uncovered.

Imagine Facebook banning that photo because it showed a naked nose. Wouldn't all of the people find that outrageous? What is the difference between banning a photo of people wearing blue shoes versus someone wearing nothing artificial?

In my view, such acts of censorship are violent. I don't feel offended though :). I understand why it happens and how we may change it.

One way to help people not feel offended and get rid of notions such as obscenity, is to expose them to real, verifiable information. The more you know about the 'real' (scientific) world, the less likely it is for you to be hurt by such imaginary notions. If you know that beauty is a subjective notion, if someone then tells you that you are ugly, you cannot be affected by that attempt to hurt your feelings. You will understand that it is only his subjective reaction. If someone would tell me that I am so ugly that he pukes a little bit into his mouth everytime he sees me, I would tell him to be careful not to choke on his vomit. :)

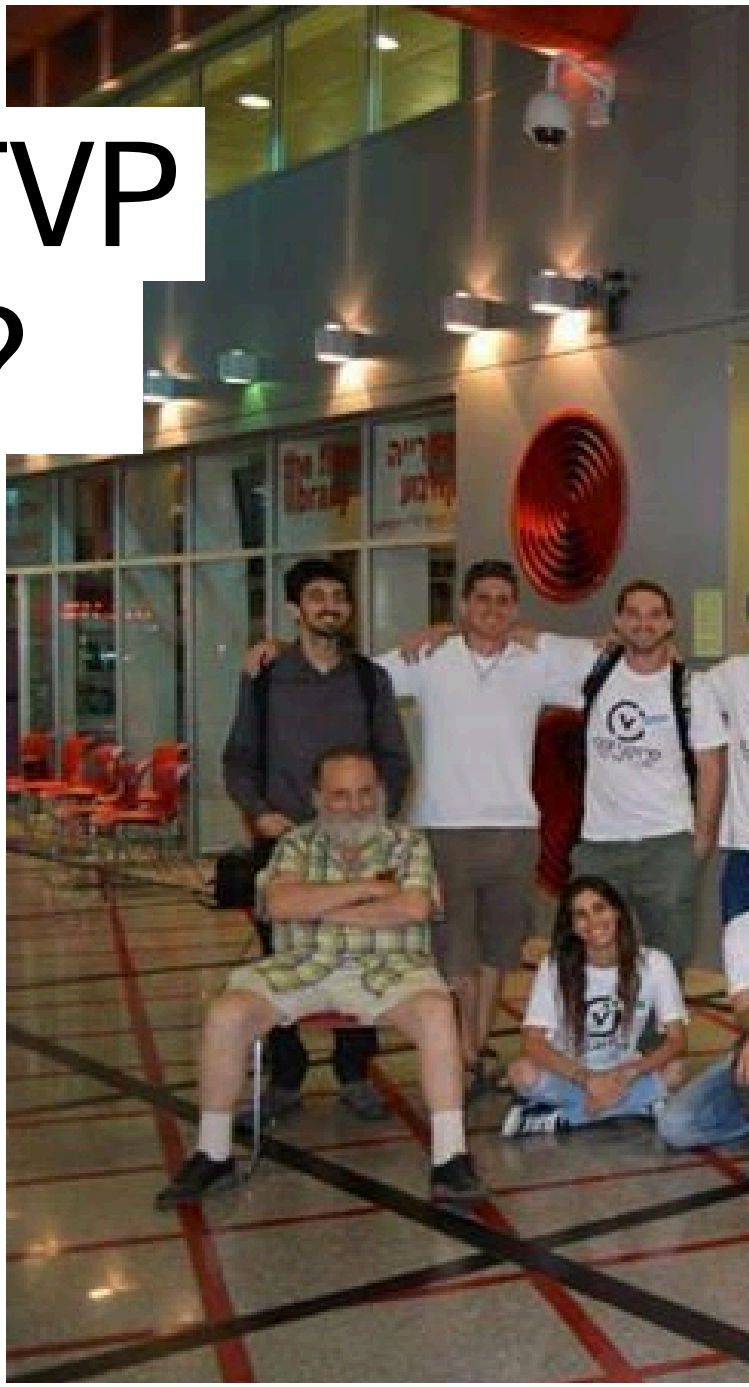
A scientific mind is the most wonderful mind a human can sculpt. A scientific mind understands that racism, nationalism, beauty, art, social classes, money and so on, are only human inventions and that it would be near to impossible to be hurt by notions revolving around these concepts. If you recognize that nationalities are human inventions, you happen to be Italian and someone says that "All Italians are thieves", you cannot be harmed by that because you immediately recognize the irrelevancy of this claim. This perhaps applies to every such artificial notion there could be.

A word, a sword, an ass, a penis, a duck, a mock...whatever the fuck, are not the ones that are obscene or offensive. The human mind can regard them that way or not, as it is completely your choice as to how you view these things.

Let me say it again: the world can hurt you if you have less or nothing to eat, or have no comfort and so on, but many, many things that hurt you are only in your head. They are merely part of your own projection.

WHAT IS TVP ACTIVISM?

by TVP Activism admin team



TVP Activism is a collection of self-organizing groups (teams) of volunteers around the world, whose aim is to raise local & global awareness about TVP.

However, this definition falls far short of being a complete picture of all that goes on. The aim of this article is to help people understand more fully what TVP Activism is doing, and how and why they are doing it. It's a picture that grows exponentially as we welcome more people onboard.

The current structure of TVP Activism could be called TVP Activism 3.0, and as such has been in existence for approximately 20 months as of this writing.

Building on the 1.0 and 1.2 experiences, we are gradually achieving a more cohesive environment. It's not an easy task, taking into account different time zones and different personal commitments of the people in the teams!

Even for teams where all members are in the same time zone, individual work hours and/or family commitments can complicate the coordination of online meetings.

At the international level for example, when hosting a meeting for all of the POCs (Points of Contact), there will always be someone for whom the meeting falls in the middle of their night!

To help overcome this, we always record meetings so that they can be listened to at a later date. We also preserve all meeting minutes (summary notes) to have a written account of the various updates and news presented within each get-together.

Our ultimate goal is to educate both ourselves and others about the proposals of The Venus Project, while at the same time build strong and stable teams of activists.

This will ensure we have capable people out there informing others correctly, without sharing personal projections or mistaken ideas. The word "educate" should never be a barrier to people who want to help.

At any time you join any kind of organization, be it a voluntary effort or a professional environment, you will always need a period of adjustment to how things are organized, and The Venus Project has such a vast range of topics to delve into that the learning process never stops!

We are gradually seeing more and more people preparing themselves to give public talks about TVP, organize local screenings of TVP-related documentaries, and prepare various kinds of street activism, while those who collaborate within the Activism teams are focused on helping everyone achieve these goals in as smooth and professional way as possible.

Almost every week we hear news about someone, somewhere around the world, who has organized a TVP-focused event of some kind.

Perhaps someone is working on a translation of TVP material, maybe a team in another city has found a place to hold 'in person' meetings, maybe one of the teams has held a public screening - there's so much going on!

Curiously enough, however, a significantly large amount of people still seem to be 'out there' in the arena alone.

Often times, efforts are being duplicated without people even realizing it, precisely because they aren't in contact with the organized groups where project ideas are shared, and collaboration at the international level is paramount.

IN THE INTEREST OF CLARITY, ALLOW US TO INTRODUCE TVP€ S DEFINITION OF THE TERMS €SUPPORTER€ AND €VOLUNTEER€.

A supporter is a person who agrees with what The Venus Project proposes, will post relevant information in online platforms and talk to people about this direction, but isn't actively involved in any of the teams.

A volunteer is a person who, as well as sharing information online, is also a member of at least one of the TVP teams. This might be within the activist team for their country or state, or perhaps as a member of one or more of the teams or departments such as the TVPMedia team (with Audio, Editorial, Graphics & Video departments), the Linguistic Team (all official transcriptions/translations), Social Networking (Facebook and other social network outreach), TVP Magazine (you're reading one now!), Human Resources (promotes open needs of TVP and TVP Activism), and others.

All volunteers are unpaid and work in the various teams/departments collaboratively contributing their time, experience and skills to a variety of projects to help achieve our aims and proposals.

Taking advantage of working directly with the TVP Activism structure is beneficial to everyone involved in the teams. We have support systems in place for such things as video discussions for "Question and Answer" sessions after screenings, so that a small, unexperienced team can still hold a documentary screening and, with the help of people who do have experience, answer the questions that always arise.

Through inter-team communication, we can keep everyone up to date on the latest TVP news, provide new informative material to be shared on social networks and help new supporters find the team best suited to their talents so that they can collaborate more closely. We also provide the opportunity for deeper study about TVP and its proposals for a Resource-Based Economy so as to prepare more supporters and volunteers able to raise awareness.

Becoming a part of the international online community offers people more tools to work with, as well as the combined experience and support from all the other volunteers in the various teams.

So, to help everyone out there be 'on the same page' and enjoy being part of what is fast becoming a heaving mass of folk around the planet who are wanting to see major changes in the way society is organised, we need to work together on our projects, and....are we not moving towards a collaborative society anyway?

€HOW CAN I JOIN TVP ACTIVISM?

The first thing anyone interested in becoming active will probably want to do is to find out if there are others in their country or state who are already involved in TVP Activism.

- On the TVP website, there is a list of the current POCs who can welcome you on board and help you get to know the others in the team. The activist teams who are still quite small will give you the chance to help them grow from the beginning. The more established activist teams can help you benefit from the experience they have already gained. Go to thev enusproject.com >> Get Involved >> Online Community and look for the "Find a Point of Contact" button, just under the main menu.

- If there is no POC (Point of Contact) for your area yet, then you might like to join the online community and the section corresponding to where you are in the world. Check to see if anyone has written a post looking for others who are interested in being more active. If no one has, you might like to be the one who does that. As your own online community grows, you will probably find it interesting to join the International Discussions group, as you may find someone there that you can connect with on an international level. Take your time to get to know people and find out where you can help to the best of your abilities.

- We also have a list of official facebook groups and pages that you can check out to see if there is one for your country. If you find there isn't one, please contact TVP Activism at a dmin@tvpactivism.com. There are many unofficial groups and pages out there that are not always sharing relevant information about TVP.

  If they are not on this list, they are not official. For this reason, we ask everyone to please not create any new TVP-focused Facebook groups o r pages without consulting with TVP Activism first.

Once you find a team you would like to join, it's important to take the time to find out all that is going on there, the tools that the team uses, who is who and who does what. In other words, how the team works and organizes itself.

Be patient with this process and remember, Rome wasn't built in a day! Some teams have been around a while and already have projects underway and are very organized. Some teams are quite new and still finding their footing.

WHAT KINDS OF ACTIVITIES ARE THE ACTIVISM TEAMS ORGANIZING?

Depending on the size of the team and the abilities of the different members, various kinds of events can be organized. The most important one we are preparing for now is mass screenings of the new documentary series, "The Choice is Ours", which will soon be ready for public release.

A documentary screening is perhaps one of the most typical events that teams create. This display of Jacques designs on large boards in the street in Bulgaria is another way of introducing TVP to the general public.

THE VENUS PROJECT

CLEVELAND

THE TEAM IN ISRAEL HAD WONDERFUL SUCCESS WITH A REAL THEATER SCREENING OF PARADISE OR OBLIVION, FOLLOWED BY A QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION.

שאלות תשובות
יונתן בירד
מנשה ויסבוך
יונתן גן-מור

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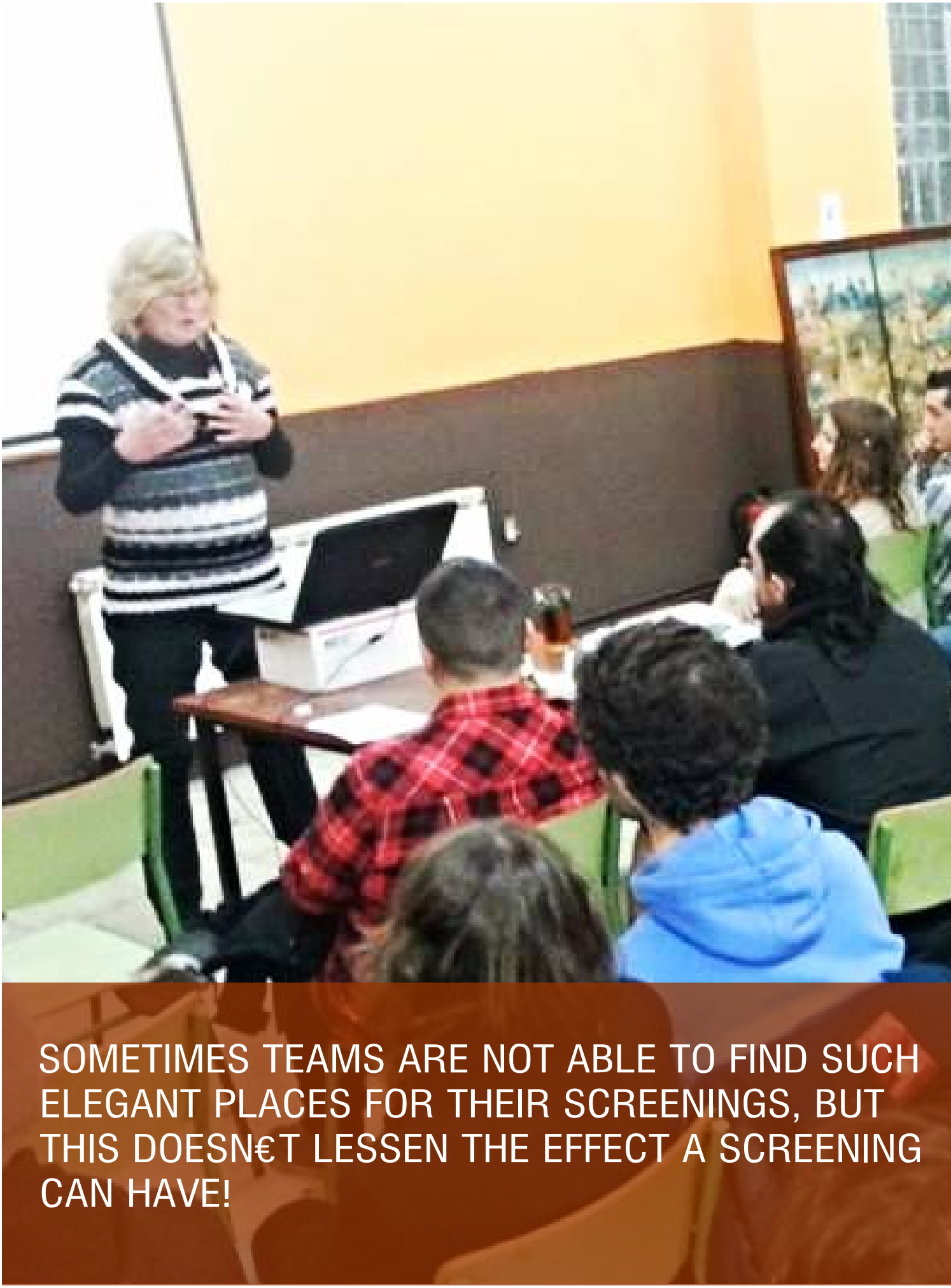


SOMETIMES TEAMS ARE NOT ABLE TO FIND SUCH ELEGANT PLACES FOR THEIR SCREENINGS, BUT THIS DOESN€T LESSEN THE EFFECT A SCREENING CAN HAVE!

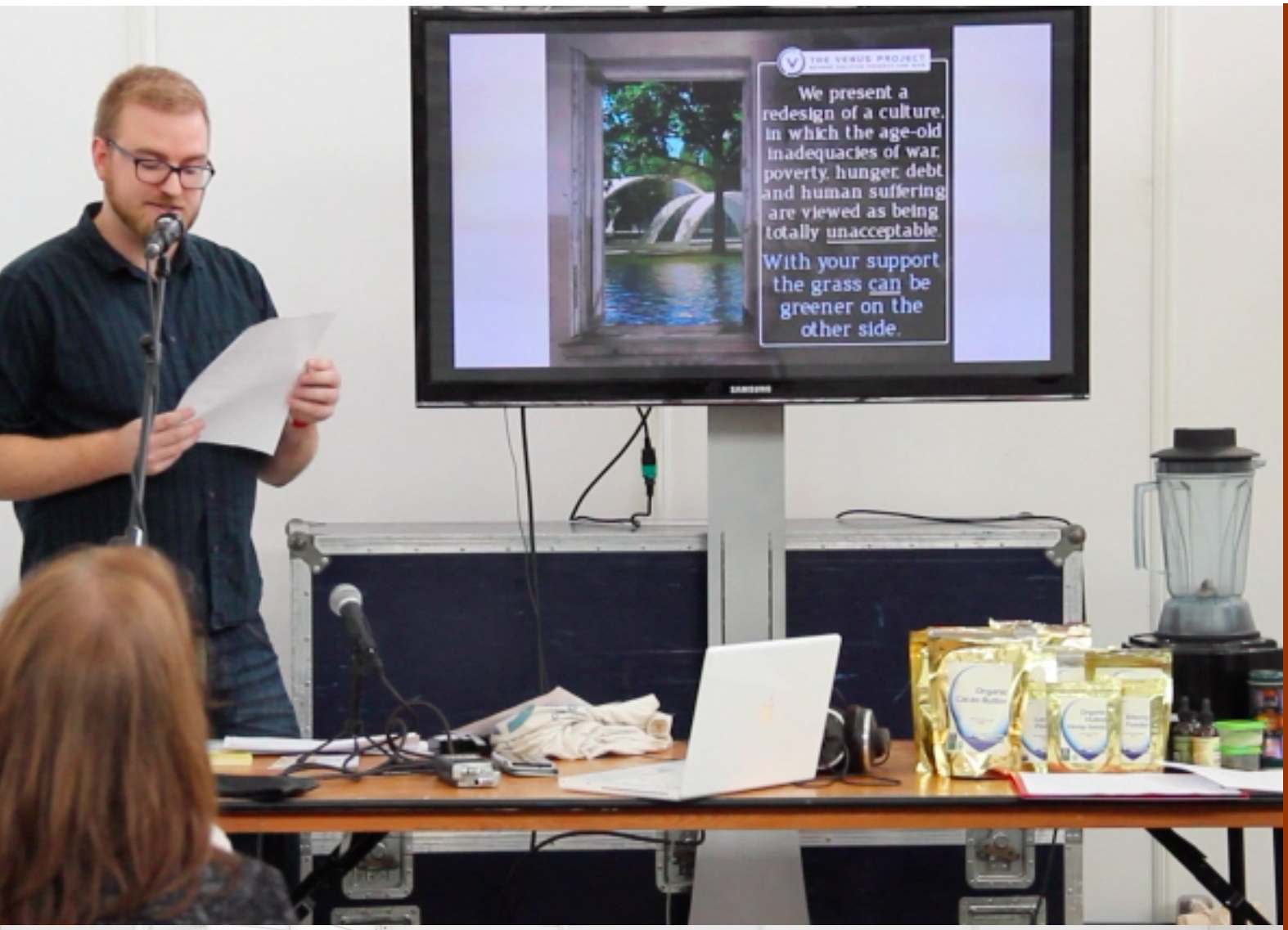
CHAT SESSION AFTER THE SCREENING.

STREET ACTIVISM DURING A PROTEST MARCH IN MADRID.

HERE, ONE OF OUR POCS FOR SPAIN IS PRESENTING A FAMOUS TV JOURNALIST (JORDI ÉVOLE)

ARMENIA HELD A SCREENING OF "PARADISE OR OBLIVION" IN A HIGH SCHOOL.

SOME TEAMS PARTICIPATE AS GUESTS IN EVENTS PLANNED BY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS THE UK TEAM DOES IN THE LOCAL ANNUAL VEGGIE FEST. AIDEN FRY, ONE OF THE POCS FOR THE UK, PARTICIPATED THIS YEAR WITH A TALK ABOUT A RESOURCE-BASED ECONOMY.


THE VENUS PROJECT
We present a redesign of a culture, in which the age-old inadequacies of war, poverty, hunger, debt, and human suffering are viewed as being totally unacceptable.
With your support the grass can be greener on the other side.

SUE EVERATT (POC SPAIN) WAS INVITED TO GIVE A TALK IN AN EVENT CREATED BY AN ITALIAN ORGANIZATION AT THE START OF THE YEAR. SHE MET UP WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE ITALIAN TEAM AND THEIR POC FEDERICO AS WELL AS SASO (POC SLOVENIA), AND SPENT A COUPLE OF WONDERFUL DAYS INTRODUCING PEOPLE IN GROSETTO, ITALY, TO THE VENUS PROJECT.

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THE VENUS PROJECT

MEGLIO CHE I SOLDI NON POSSONO COMPRARE"
PROSSIMAMENTE ANCHE IN VERSIONE ITALIANA
Todo lo que el dinero no puede comprar
THE VENUS PR
OLTRE POLITICA, POVERTA
scopri di più su http://it.the

OUR POC IN VENEZUELA, EMILIO, ISN€T AFRAID TO GO IT ALONE, IF NEEDS BE. HERE HE IS CAMPING OUT IN A LOCAL PARK TO CALL THE ATTENTION OF THE PRESS TO SPEAK WITH THEM ABOUT TVP!

HERE IS EMILIO IN A RADIO STUDIO WITH SOME OF THE OTHER VENEZUELAN ACTIVISTS.

TVP CHILE HAS PHYSICAL (IN-PERSON) MEETUPS, AND ALSO PARTICIPATES IN EVENTS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS ECOFONDAS ESTACIONES

HERE IS ANOTHER OF OUR POCS, CLIFTON, FROM GEORGIA US. LIKE MANY, HE TRAVELED TO VENUS AND MET JACQUE & ROXANNE IN PERSON

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO HELP THE VENUS PROJECT?

If you already have skills in a particular area, you can introduce yourself to any of the teams listed below.

TVP Activism Administration:
admin@tvpactivism.com

Do you have organizational experience? Are you a good communicator? Would you like to participate in one of the local volunteer teams? Or start a team in your area if one doesn't yet exist? Sue, Federico or Sašo will help you out.

TVP Magazine:
editor@tvpmagazine.com

If you'd like to write articles that are relevant to the direction of The Venus Project, we would love to publish them in TVP Magazine. We will also help you with proofreading, so you don't have to worry about that aspect. If you need more details, please don't hesitate to contact us through the link on the main website.

Linguistic Team International:
linguisticteam@thevenusproject.com

Do you speak more than one language or are you exceptionally strong in English? Transcribing, proofreading, translating and translation proofreading are all skills that are very much needed in creating and distributing all of the official translation work for TVP. Write to LTI or introduce yourself in the LTI forum to learn how to join the fun.

TVP Social Media contact:
social.media@thevenusproject.com - Jennifer, Scott

Is social media networking your area of expertise? Or perhaps as a hobby you are passionate about? Do you have experience with Facebook, Twitter, Google+, etc.? Social media always needs help.

TVPMedia:
Do you have a background in media? If so, we have four teams you can collaborate with.

- Audio Department:
audio.tvpmedia@thevenusproject.com

The Audio Department's focus is on the production and improvement of professional music, narrations and audio effects for use in TVP educational and promotional film & video media. If you are into music, audio engineering or dubbing, please feel free to contact us.

- Editorial Department:
editorial.tvpmedia@thevenusproject.com

Our Editorial Department handles the editing & proofreading of most TVP Activism materials, including TVPMagazine, along with maintaining several activist text-based resources. As you might imagine, there is a lot here to handle and experienced proofreading volunteers are very much needed to help cover all of it.

- Graphics Department:
graphics.tvpmedia@thevenusproject.com

Graphics Dep't members work alongside other project teams to create compelling and informative images for their projects.

A variety of image-making needs exists here, if you're so inclined.

- Video Department:
video.tvpmedia@thevenusproject.com

The Video department is interested in creating high level education videos, tutorials and other promotional material for The Venus Project. If you are experienced in any aspect of video production, please contact us!

Web design:
webmaster@thevenusproject.com

Would you like to help in designing new web pages and tools to improve our efficiency.

Human Resources:
hr@thevenusproject.com - Sven, Carolyn

Do you have an impressive CV in a scientific, engineering or architectural field and would like to get updates on new projects to help in the future? Then email HR!

3D Production Team:
andrew.buxton@thevenusproject.com

The teams goal is to produce visual effects aimed at visualizing a Resource-based economy and the many designs of The Venus Project. We are currently seeking professionals in the games and film industry such as: Modellers, 2D Artists (Texturing), Animators, Riggers, DMP Artists, Compositors, VFX Supervisors, VFX TD's etc.

CORCEN Simulation team:
joab.russo@tvpdesign.com

Designing an interactive simulation monitoring existing data about the world's resources and projecting this world data into future analytical data sets.

Official Project Proposals - Global

admin@thevenusproject.com

Do you have a serious project proposal and are you qualified to work on it through completion? Send an email with a well-researched presentation, video or proposal for review.

Construction Design Team:
andrew.buxton@thevenusproject.com

Currently seeking construction design professionals in senior positions to manage pre-construction architectural and engineering design of future cities and total enclosure systems.

Hopefully, all of this information will help you find the best open door for you to join us and help "pull the cart", together with the rest of the TVP teams. Whatever you decide to do, whether you join an activism team or one or more of the other teams, remember that this is a globally collaborative project in which we are very likely looking at a long road ahead of us.

This is not something that can be started today and have it finished tomorrow. Be aware of this and bring patience and a strong passion to learn.

Together, we will reach our goal sooner than each one of us ever could out on his/her own island.

WELCOME ON BOARD!

WE RECOMMEND

AA WORLD

Over that past 7 months or so, we (TVPMag) produced a monthly series of articles called AA (Autonomous Automated) WORLD to showcase The Venus Project's feasibility from a technological perspective, even limited to today's technological development. You can expect to see supercomputers, smart cities and smart buildings, assembly robots, chef robots, surgeon robots, self-driving cars, a wide variety of 3D printers, materials with amazing properties, and apps that can monitor your health or help you with everyday tasks. All in all, a whopping 258 pages of awesome 'technology-porn'!

SCIENCE : 1700 TO 1900

In the period 1700-1900, kings and empires rose and fell, but science conquered all, taking the world by storm. Yet, as the 1700s began, the mysteries of the universe were pondered by "natural philosophers"—the term "scientist" didn't even exist until the mid 19th century—whose explanations couldn't help but be influenced by the religious thought and political and social contexts that shaped their world.

read it »

watch it »

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